



QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION 2026 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, JUNE 10, 2026



CARE REIMAGINED *Empowerment, Precision and Accountability*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Care is a shared responsibility – across government, communities, and residents alike.
- Protect excellence: in tight budget times, make strategic choices that safeguard the most critical services.
- Move upstream from reactive service delivery to community ecosystem transformation.
- Trust is the prerequisite for equitable care, especially in communities with histories of government mistreatment.
- Data as a precision lever: trusted, equity-centered data enables proactive service delivery and reveals where resilience already lives.
- Technology should serve people: artificial intelligence (AI), telehealth, and integrated records reduce burdens and maximize service provider time with residents.
- Take care of the caretakers: employee wellness and workforce investment are themselves acts of care.

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' REMARKS

Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair, Board of Supervisors (remarks delivered by Joe Waz, Second Vice Chair, Quality and Productivity Commission)

Supervisor Solis described the county's budget pressure as "unprecedented in magnitude" and called on county leaders to stand "strong and united," confident that collaboration would inspire thoughtful change.

► **Video:** <https://vimeo.com/1201092333>

COUNTY PANEL: PROTECTING EXCELLENCE AND EQUITABLE CARE UNDER PRESSURE

Moderator: William B. Parent, Chair, Quality and Productivity Commission

Department Heads were asked: given budget cuts, how do you protect your areas of excellence and ensure equitable service?

Dr. Christina Ghaly, Director, Los Angeles Health Services (LA Health Services)

LA Health Services serves nearly half a million patients per year, tracks hundreds of clinical metrics, and benchmarks against the nation's best hospitals. Ghaly stressed that budget pressures demand sharper strategic choices: "The one mission that has to matter most is patient care." She called for embracing AI, restructuring facilities, and partnering differently with the private sector to preserve clinical excellence.

Lisa M. Garrett, Director, Department of Human Resources (DHR)

DHR is a central agency serving all 40 county departments and 115,000 employees. Garrett described DHR's COVID-era mobilization – deploying 20,000+ disaster service workers, standing up new departments, and expanding whole-person wellness programs. Her mantra: "Innovate and automate all things HR." Caring for the caretakers, she said, is itself service excellence: "We have to put our own oxygen mask on first."



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Brandon T. Nichols, Director, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

Nichols framed equitable service as a trust problem. DCFS has built trust through community intermediaries – former parents who vouch for the department’s intent – and by adopting community-generated program ideas. He credited listening and sharing power for DCFS’s reduction of foster care in Los Angeles County from 60,000 to 10,000 children over four decades.

Maral Karaccusian, Director, Aging and Disabilities Department

As a newer department head, Karaccusian emphasized person-centered approaches and community partnerships as essential to keeping the county’s most vulnerable older adults and people with disabilities connected to care under fiscal constraint.

► **Video:** <https://vimeo.com/1200926076>

COMMUNITY PANEL: FROM SERVICE SYSTEMS TO ECOSYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

Moderator: Dr. Neal Halfon, Director, The Center for Healthier Children, Families & Communities

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Halfon opened with research published in JAMA showing all 170 indicators of child health and well-being in the U.S. have declined over 17 years. His prescription: move from an “Inside Out” service-system model (departments reaching into communities) to an “Outside In” ecosystem approach (communities driving change, connecting upward to county services). Three principles: every system produces the outcomes it’s designed to produce; complex systems must be transformed, not patched; and learning systems are essential to transformation. He pointed to Pomona as proof of concept.

Anita Mikus, Managing Director, Kyndryl, State and Local Government (U.S.)

Mikus organized her technology lens around people, process, and technology. Her vision: a resident enters data once, and it flows across all agencies to surface every benefit they qualify for. Near-term tools – telehealth, remote patient monitoring, electronic health records – reduce both resident and worker burden. Key finding: 75% of constituents expect government digital services to match private-sector experiences. “Trusted data enables agencies to deliver the right service to the right resident at the right time.”

Alberto Retana, President and CEO, Community Coalition

Retana stressed that trust-building and resident empowerment must precede effective service design. Drawing on Community Coalition’s work in South LA, he urged county leaders to hold the line for their communities at a time of democratic stress, noting that public servants have an outsized role when civic institutions are under pressure. Retana also encouraged County Department Heads to work more with the community and said that he would be glad to share the information from The South LA Poll which is a survey conducted from January 19 to April 24 and included a sample size of 1,620 residents.

Andrea Martinez, Deputy City Manager, City of Pomona (on behalf of Tim Sandoval, Mayor, City of Pomona)

Pomona’s 22-year arc – from a 2004 courthouse-steps murder that galvanized the city, through its Youth and Family Master Plan and “Pomona’s Promise” collective impact initiative, to UCLA’s neighborhood-level Early Development Instrument (EDI) resilience mapping – offered a replicable model: sustainable transformation requires time, trust, funding, and an asset-based rather than deficit-based lens.

► **Videos:** <https://vimeo.com/1201074986>; <https://vimeo.com/1201087649>