CEA ACTION PROPOSAL

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date: August 17, 2026

2. Department: California Department of Public Health

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Center for Healthy Communities / Environmental and Occupational Health

4. CEA Position Title

Assistant Deputy Director, Environmental and Occupational Health

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (*2-3 sentences)*

This position supports the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) mission and strategic plan by developing statewide strategies and department-wide policies to manage the challenging and evolving fields of environmental and occupational health. The Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) Assistant Deputy Director (ADD) of Environmental and Occupational Health (EOH) is responsible for planning and implementing programmatic and policy priorities, as well as the effective management and oversight of the Environmental Health Investigations Branch (EHIB), the Occupational Health Branch (OHB), and the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch (CLPPB). This request is to convert a vacant Public Health Medical Administrator (PHMA) II, CEA to a CEA B.

6. Reports to: (*Class Title/Level*)

Deputy Director, Center for Healthy Communities, CEA C

7. Relationship with Department Director (*Select one)*

☑ Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.

☐ Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(*Explain*):

8. Organizational Level *(Select one)*

☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☑ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The ADD, EOH functions as a member of the Director's Executive staff and actively participates in program and policy formation and executive decision-making processes, provides guidance, and makes program and policy recommendations related to environmental and occupational health. This position supports the CDPH mission and strategic plan by developing statewide strategies and department-wide policies to manage the challenging and evolving fields of environmental and occupational health. The ADD is responsible for planning and implementation of program and policy priorities, as well as the effective management and oversight of the EHIB, the OHB, and the CLPPB.

The ADD is responsible for providing leadership, scientific guidance, performance accountability, and general oversight of the state's major public health and prevention programs related to environmental and occupational health, including initiatives aimed at reducing preventable illness and death resulting from environmental and occupational exposures. The ADD manages communications and represents programs and public health issues internally and externally, including with control agencies. This involves highly controversial, sensitive public health issues in environmental and occupational health, including the prevention and control of environmental and occupational disease through exemplary investigation, education, and technical assistance, which incorporates valid and current scientific and surveillance information and data. The CHC is committed to public health approaches that strengthen both state and local leadership, alignment, and partnerships to drive action to influence determinants of health and environmental justice, eliminate health inequities, and achieve positive health outcomes. CHC's strategic priority is a shared vision for healthy and resilient communities.

The ADD advises the Deputy Director, Assistant Health Officer, and Director on sensitive and complex issues related to environmental and occupational health. The ADD collaborates with other Centers, Divisions, and Offices; internal and external stakeholders; subject matter experts; local health jurisdictions; and programs. The ADD may represent the Department in contacts with the Legislature, including testifying, and have interaction with Under-Secretaries in the Governor's Office, Cabinet Secretaries, Department Directors, California Health and Human Services Agency staff, state departments, federal control agencies (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]), and regulatory agencies. The ADD also represents the department on public health policy issues related to environmental and occupational health including lead exposure and poisoning, work related injury and illness, and human exposures to environmental hazards such as air pollutants, wildfire smoke, pesticides, and other toxicological threats.

The ADD develops partnerships and coordinates with federal, state, and local governments, public and private nonprofit agencies, and constituencies. The role leverages government, public, and private resources and interests to maintain programmatic, surveillance and epidemiology functions; focuses on high priority public health needs and emerging issues; and coordinates with other Center/Department/State programs and initiatives. The ADD represents and provides support and guidance on sensitive and highly visible programs, issues, and health needs characterized by significant public interest and/or controversy, requiring a high-level public health, scientific, policy, and program content expertise in addition to general management. The ADD acts as a department liaison to a wide range of organizations in the areas of environmental and occupational health, public health, and clinical medicine - including academic institutions, research organizations, voluntary agencies, and advocacy groups. The ADD provides support for Department responses in the event of emergencies, disasters, and other public health threats.

The ADD guides the development of mission, plans, policies and strategies that are based on scientific evidence and frameworks, rigorous assessment of health needs, and best practices which integrate environmental and occupational disease preventive policies and practices into public health practice. The ADD improves and promotes healthy environments and behaviors among population groups and communities, improves the environment and systems, and strives to increase the professional capacity and leadership of staff to address these and other public health issues. The ADD collaborates with Center leadership and plays a key role in setting CHC's culture and values; mentors and directs Branch Managers towards CHC's strategic priorities; and aligns resources and capital across the CHC to achieve shared goals.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- ☑ Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- ☐ Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- ☐ Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description:

CDPH's mission is to optimize the health and well-being of the people of California. The CHC helps to accomplish this goal by leading the way toward healthy communities and safe environments for all Californians.

The EOH Pillar within CHC is committed to public health approaches that strengthen both state and local leadership, alignment, and partnerships to drive action to influence determinants of health, eliminate health inequities, and achieve positive health outcomes. CHC's strategic priority is a shared vision for healthy and resilient communities with local health jurisdictions.

EOH's branches play a critical role in the department when it comes to both emergency and emerging needs in California. The EOH pillar provides expertise pertaining to various natural and man-made disasters such as fires, infectious diseases, lead exposures, and acute toxicologic spills or exposures through programmatic expertise in occupational health, chemical exposures, epidemiology, and toxicology. This limited expertise is leveraged in nearly every emergency in which the Department and Governor's Office engages.

The CEA plays an active role in collaborating with state and federal agencies, presenting at or providing information for legislative hearings, working with Department of Finance, Legislative Analyst Office, academic institutions, local health departments, and community based organizations in an effort to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships that advance public health, environmental health, and occupational health policy on behalf of the department.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

The functions of this position are currently allocated to the PHMA II, CEA classification. The CHC's current organizational structure consists of three Assistant Deputy Directors: PHMA II,CEA, Chronic Disease Prevention; PHMA II, CEA, EOH; and Manager II, Strategy and Alignment. The PHMA II, EOH will be reallocated to a CEA B.

As a PHMA II, CEA, the position has been difficult to fill. Since the retirement of a long term incumbent in 2018, the position has been filled for only short periods of time. The CHC has conducted 10 unsuccessful recruitments for this role, each time advertising on LinkedIn and Monster.com, while also conducting targeted advertisements and sharing the advertisement with various medical and public health associations. The PHMA II position has been vacant since October 2025.

Medical doctors with adequate administrative and managerial acumen are extremely difficult to recruit, and those with an environmental and occupational health background are a small population. The EOH programmatic and policy needs at the division level do not require a licensed physician. The ADD position requires an incumbent with extensive public health expertise, partnered with strong administrative and managerial skills. The CHC and EOH have clinical and medical expertise embedded within the center and division negating the need to have this expertise at the highest levels of the center. The EOH also partners with other clinicians across the Department and other entities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the California Poison Control System, and academic subject matter experts. By converting this position to a CEA B, CHC will be able to broaden the candidate pool to search for a candidate with the necessary public health, environmental and occupational health background, and administrative management and policy expertise.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The ADD supports and advises the CHC Deputy Director on program, policy, and research pertaining to environmental and occupational health. The position is responsible for providing leadership, administrative and scientific guidance, performance accountability, and general oversight of the state's major public health and prevention programs related to environmental and occupational health, as well as directing policies and initiatives to reduce preventable morbidity and mortality caused by environmental and occupational exposures.

Specifically, the ADD will be the principle policy maker for major programmatic policy decisions on environmental and occupational health issues such as childhood lead poisoning, lead remediation and abatement, mercury poisoning, biomonitoring, perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) exposure, wildfire smoke, air and home pollutants, mold, pesticides, and toxicologic and other environmental exposures that may occur in any man-made or natural disaster. These policy decisions have an impact on: 1) all Californians the programs directly serve; 2) all Californians the programs indirectly serve because often times policy decisions overseen by the ADD set precedent for the field and affect state standards; 3) federal and state funding; 4) implementation of statutory and regulatory requirements; and 5) legislative policy changes. The ADD will approve publications, including assessment and assurance that rigorous scientific methods were used, and ensure proper escalation to the Directorate or Agency for review/approval of sensitive or potentially controversial issues.

Specific examples of program policy decisions include:
1) The Southern California Fires of 2025 highlighted the high-consequence and high-profile programmatic and policy decisions that the ADD must inform and oversee. All the branches within the Environmental and Occupational (EOH) were activated to support program and policy decisions related to the immediate and long term aftermath of the fires. All Branches were called upon to synthesize emerging and complex information about these unprecedented fires and give program and policy recommendations to locals as well as other State Agencies and Departments. This required high level leadership and support of our very technical teams to ensure recommendations were scientifically grounded but also practical. This included program and policy decisions about soil testing, blood lead level testing, recommendations for PPE during clean-up, protections for day laborers related to clean-up, air quality monitoring, water monitoring, and a myriad of other environmental health issues. The decisions and recommendations have long-reaching, state-wide impact beyond just the Southern California fires as it set a precedent of recommendations and actions in future fires.

2) EHIB is often at the forefront of emerging toxicologic threats that garner media and legislative interest. The ADD must provide high level leadership and guidance to navigate very visible, political issues. Examples include the Moss Landing BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) storage facility fire in January 2025 which represented the largest BESS fire in the nation to date and raised a number of policy questions that the ADD would help guide teams in navigating. Additional examples of high profile situations that require policy leadership from the ADD include: the ongoing odors and chemical exposures from the Chiquita Canyon landfill, the exposures from the ongoing Tijuana River pollution affecting San Diego County, the largest and deadliest toxic mushroom poisoning in national history that affected Californians statewide at the end of 2025 and beginning of 2026, and ongoing findings and education around the California Biomonitoring Program including program and policy decisions regarding PFAS which is a growing area of interest and concern.

3) California, and the nation, is currently in the midst of an incredibly deadly silicosis outbreak among counter-top workers that cut engineered stone (ie quartz counter-tops). The OHB has been at the forefront of discovering this outbreak, tracking the rapid rise of cases and deaths in the last seven years, and contributing critical subject matter expertise to inform progressive regulatory changes to protect these counter-top workers. There have been a number of legislative concepts introduced in the last several years, some of which have placed new responsibilities on OHB. There has been growing media and legislative interest in silicosis in recent years which the ADD will continue to navigate with technical, administrative, and political acumen.

4) The ADD oversees the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch which is statutorily mandated to reduce childhood lead poisoning throughout the state. This is a highly visible program that the Legislature and fee payers (those that historically generated lead exposures) have watched very closely. The Branch has undergone audits related to its oversight and execution of the program. The ADD is responsible for program and policy decisions that ensure appropriate oversight of the program, compliance with statutorily mandated work, appropriate use of fees, and appropriate development of lead-related regulations.

5) Other policy topics covered by this ADD include: environmental investigations and guidance related to climate change, guidance to protect workers from H5N1, mercury exposure in skin cream, mold and toxin exposure in buildings, and lead exposure at workplaces (e.g., firing ranges).

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The ADD makes decisions pertaining to program and funding priorities, technical guidance, legislative and regulatory needs, and policy priorities - the scope of which affects programs and Californians statewide. This position is responsible for providing leadership, administrative and scientific guidance, performance accountability, and general oversight of the state's major public health and prevention programs related to environmental and occupational health, as well as directing policies and initiatives to reduce preventable illness and death caused by environmental and occupational exposures. The ADD collaborates with the CDPH Directorate, program staff, subject matter experts and internal and external stakeholders, including the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), other state departments and local health jurisdictions, to maximize resources and effectively deliver environmental and occupational health services to the public. The ADD approves health education documents and publications, including ensuring appropriate rigorous scientific methods were used, and ensures proper escalation to the Directorate for review/approval of sensitive topics or potentially controversial issues. The ADD also acts as back-up to the Deputy Director, providing direction and having decision-making authority over all 7 Branches and Offices of CHC as needed.

Specifically, the ADD is the primary decision-maker for three Branches within the CHC's EOH pillar:
1. Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch
2. Environmental Health Investigations Branch (which includes the Emergency Preparedness Team)
3. Occupational Health Branch

Each of these Branches delivers statewide multi-faceted programs and have been recognized nationally as leaders in their respective fields.

The ADD functions as a member of CDPH Director's Executive/Senior Leadership and actively participates in policy formation and executive decision-making processes at the department and statewide levels.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The ADD will both develop and implement new policy and interpret and implement existing policy. The ADD serves as a subject matter expert on regulatory development and implementation of new and existing statutory mandates pertaining to environmental and occupational health, which includes a variety of chemical, metal, and other toxicological exposures. The ADD will also propose and provide input on Legislative Proposals and Budget Change Proposals.

The incumbent will assist in policy and legislation development by advising stakeholders, CDPH leadership, and legislative members on the impact proposed mandates would have on the public's health due to environmental and/or occupational hazards. The ADD will be responsible for reviewing and providing recommendations on legislative bills, budget requests, regulations, safety guidelines, and stakeholder proposals pertaining to environmental and occupational health. This includes partnerships with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (CalOSHA), the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), the Governor's Office, the California Health and Human Services (CalHHS), business sectors, and local health departments to reduce disease and deaths resulting from environmental and occupational factors.