



Mathematica in California: Progress Together to Improve and Transform Health Care

For more than 50 years, Mathematica has worked at the intersection of data, methods, policy, and practice to inform health policy debates and address decision makers' information needs. We are the insight partner that illuminates the path to progress for public and private sector changemakers. A common mission drives our team of more than 1,400 experts across the country and around the globe: to improve public well-being. We aspire to shape an equitable and just world where evidence drives decisions. Reimagining the way the world gathers and uses data, we uncover the evidence that offers our partners the confidence and clarity they need to find out what they can do, how to make it happen, and where to go next.

Since Mathematica's first project in California in 1976, our multidisciplinary teams have partnered with state and local governments, foundations, businesses, universities, and professional associations to improve programs, refine strategies, and enhance understanding. Our experts dive into urgent social challenges with rigor and objectivity to uncover evidence and understanding that weathers the toughest tests. Our dedicated health team has deep expertise in assessing policy, improving programs, and employing health information technology to address the quality, efficiency, delivery, affordability, equity, and financing of health care. In 2009, Mathematica opened an office in Oakland, and today, more than 40 employees work from Oakland, and many more work from home in California.

Leading with evidence: Notable California projects

/ **Evaluation of the Dental Transformation Initiative Program (2018–present)**

In collaboration with the **California Department of Health Care Services**, Mathematica is evaluating the Dental Transformation Initiative (DTI) program. As part of California's Medi-Cal 2020 Section 1115

Waiver Demonstration, the DTI program aims to improve access to and receipt of preventive dental services, earlier and more effective identification and management of dental caries and oral health, and continuity of care. Using an equity lens, we collect a variety of data in English and Spanish: surveys of providers and beneficiaries; key informant interviews; case studies; and analyses of eligibility, claims, and other administrative data to assess the program's success in improving the dental and oral health outcomes of children in the state. We conducted telephone interviews with parents and caregivers of children engaged by the DTI program across 10 diverse counties in California to understand their experiences with dental care. In 2019, we discussed findings in an [Interim Evaluation Report of the DTI](#).

/ **Identifying and Analyzing Strategies for Preventing Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence (2021–present)**

Mathematica is identifying and analyzing strategies for preventing and addressing domestic violence and intimate partner violence through Medicaid for the **Blue Shield of California Foundation**. We conducted a landscape review, consulted about 20 experts, and

held a focus group with people who experienced domestic and intimate partner violence. We shared findings with communities in California and other states via a [webinar](#) and produced two policy briefs that summarized policy recommendations relevant for Medi-Cal and other state Medicaid programs. A final report will synthesize the state of the evidence base of interventions that prevent intimate partner violence and address the needs of those affected by it.

/ **Understanding High-Impact Health Workforce Investments to Help Rural and Underserved Populations (2021)**

To inform the planning needs of the health workforce in California, Mathematica conducted a rapid review of evidence focused on understanding the highest-impact health workforce investment strategies as they relate to increasing access to care, the racial and ethnic diversity of the health workforce, and language diversity of the health workforce. We briefed the director of **California's Office of Statewide Planning and Development** on findings and implications and released [a short report and a series of thematic issue briefs](#) for the **California Health Care Foundation**.

/ **Impact Analysis of the Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax in Oakland, California (2016–2018)**

[Mathematica studied the impacts of sugar-sweetened beverage taxes](#) on retail prices, purchases, and child and adult consumption of beverages in Oakland for the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**. We collected information from stores and a matched comparison group of consumers in Oakland, including (1) prices, (2) purchase information from interviews with customers exiting the stores, and (3) household surveys of purchases and consumption. Because the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation was particularly interested in populations with historically high rates of diet-related chronic disease and consumption of such beverages were of particular interest (for example, Black, Hispanic, and low-income households), we oversampled stores in specific areas, enabling us to assess the impact of the tax for these populations and for Oakland overall after applying sample weights.

We conducted a difference-in-differences regression analysis to measure impacts among the full sample and by subgroups such as race, ethnicity, and income. The Mathematica team shared its results in presentations at the Foundation and conferences, published a [journal article](#), released an [episode](#) of the Mathematica podcast *On the Evidence*, and wrote blogs on the analysis and findings.

/ **Healthy San Francisco Program Evaluation (2009–2011)**

For the **San Francisco Department of Public Health**, Mathematica designed and [conducted a comprehensive, responsive, and flexible evaluation of the Healthy San Francisco](#) program using a mixed-methods approach. The evaluation blended a range of qualitative and descriptive information on implementing and operating the program and the population it serves with a variety of quantitative data and analytic methods aimed at measuring and monitoring the effects of Healthy San Francisco. Mathematica subcontracted with researchers from the Center for Studying Health System Change and the University of California, San Francisco, as well as with Corey, Canapary & Galanis. We produced a [final report](#) of our evaluation.

/ **Evaluation of the San Mateo Children's Health Initiative (2003–2008)**

For the **County of San Mateo**, Mathematica designed and conducted two rounds of a survey of participants in the Healthy Kids program in the county. The population served by the Healthy Kids program consisted largely of Hispanic, undocumented residents in the county. The survey was part of a larger evaluation of the San Mateo Children's Health Initiative led by the Urban Institute. The first round of data collection took place in early 2004 with 411 families currently enrolled in Healthy Kids. The second round took place in 2006 with 1,400 families. We administered the surveys via computer-assisted telephone interviewing in Spanish and English. Mathematica collaborated with the Urban Institute and University of California, San Francisco to write the [first annual report](#) of the program evaluation.