



An Independent Chapter of



American College of
Healthcare Executives
for leaders who care®

2026 CAHL Case Competition Rulebook

I. Objective

To provide students with an opportunity to analyze a real-world healthcare issue and present solutions to healthcare executives and their organizations. Students will do so using their knowledge and creativity and thus will be judged on both the quality of the analysis of the case and their presentation skills.

II. Eligibility

- A. Undergraduate and graduate students who are currently enrolled in healthcare programs that are in the geographic area of the CAHL Higher Education Network are eligible to participate. This area covers 50 of California's 58 counties and extends as far south as Kern County and San Luis Obispo and North to the Oregon border.
- B. In addition to the above, recent graduates of a graduate healthcare program who are part of the CAHL Higher Education Network and whose degree was conferred in 2026 are eligible if at least 50% of their 3–4-person team composition is comprised of active graduate students.

III. Competitor's Code of Ethics and Rules

- A. Teams must be composed of 3-4 undergrad or 3-4 graduate students at their respective schools. Any substitute team member must be approved by the CAHL Case Competition Committee Chairperson(s).
- B. All case analysis and development of case presentation materials must be done by official members of the team only.
- C. Team members may only use reference materials that are publicly available.
- D. Employees of the company featured in the case, engaged consultants and architects, internal/partnered committee workgroups, interested organizations, or any individuals represented by the other organizations identified in the materials cannot be used as a resource.
- E. This assignment requires original analysis and personal perspective. AI-generated content that lacks your own voice, critical reasoning, or evidence of your process will not be accepted. All work must be in your own words and properly cited if AI tools were used. As a crosscheck, judges may ask clarifying questions on your presented material to determine if your depth of understanding matches what you presented.
- F. Teams (including faculty advisors) must not share or gain information on the content of the presentations from other competing teams before or during the competition.
- G. Faculty advisors are instrumental in helping teams prepare for the competition and in removing logistical barriers to their attendance. However, once the case is released, faculty advisors may be available only to provide minimal preparatory assistance.

Faculty advisors should not assist with developing presentation strategy or be involved in developing any of the case team's specific solutions or recommendations. The case analysis and presentation competition are meant solely for the students. Once the competition begins, all faculty advisors, alumni, and other interested parties may act as spectators only. These individuals may not offer suggestions or revisions to the content or structure of the information presented during the official presentation time. In addition, these individuals may not share information about the content of presentations by competing teams.

- H. Team members cannot contact the host organization of the case study for insights or information of any kind.
- I. If it appears that a team has violated any of these rules, it will be investigated by the Case Study Competition Chairperson(s). If it is determined that a violation has occurred, it will result in immediate disqualification of the team and notification provided to the respective program.
- J. Participants who withdraw before the event forfeit prize eligibility if their former team wins.

IV. Case Competition Timeline

- A. All competing school teams should be registered by 11:59 PM PST on October 2, 2026, upon which they will receive a calendar invite for a virtual informational meeting on October 5, 2026, at 5:30 pm.
- B. The case study will be distributed to participating teams via email on October 5, 2026.
- C. It is recommended that all participants attend the virtual information meeting on October 5, 2026, at 5:30 pm. As the session will not be recorded, those who cannot attend should make arrangements for a delegate teammate to attend and bring back takeaways. This call will include the review of the presentation guidelines, procedures, logistics, and rubric. Any questions regarding clarification of the case content can also be asked.
- D. Teams are required to submit their materials via a Google Form file upload by 11:59 PM on November 5, 2026. This allows for the materials to be adequately reviewed by the judges prior to the event. No changes are allowed after submission.
- E. The in-person Case Study Competition will take place on Saturday, November 14, 2026, at 700 Lawrence Expy, Santa Clara, CA 95051 from 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

V. Submission Guidelines

- A. All teams are required to submit a complete PowerPoint presentation of no more than 10 mb (please refer to FAQ for tips on minimizing the PowerPoint file size) and an executive summary of no more than 500 words by 11:59 PM PST on November 5, 2026,

via a Google Form file upload. The Google Form link will be distributed via email after the October 22, 2026, virtual informational meeting.

- B. There is no limit on the number of slides, but teams will only have 15 minutes to present. Appendix slides may be included but will not contribute to a team's score, and they cannot be augmented after submission. Presentation notes should not be included.
- C. Charts, graphs, or other images SHOULD NOT be included in the Executive Summary.
- D. Executive Summaries should be written as a stand-alone document. Summarize all major recommendations, assumptions, and rationale considered throughout the analysis.
- E. All documents should include a Team name. Do not include individual student names, school names, or school references.
- F. Late submissions cannot be accepted, and the Google Form link will not allow uploads after the deadline has passed.

VI. Presentation Guidelines

- A. All teams are required to omit all mention of their school on any copies of the presentation materials. No changes to the presentation are allowed after the November 5, 2026 submission.
- B. Each team in the initial and final rounds will have a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes to present the results of their analysis, followed by a five (5) minute Question & Answer period facilitated by the judging panel.
- C. At the assigned presentation time, the Competition Facilitator will announce the team.
- D. After the announcement, the Team Leader should begin by introducing his/her team members. At the conclusion of introductions, the Team Leader should state their team is ready to begin.
- E. The Competition Facilitator will prompt the team to begin. The timekeeper will start the time clock at that time.
- F. Each team member must participate equally in the oral presentation and the question-and-answer session.
- G. The timekeeper will signal when the team has five minutes and one minute to conclude their presentation. At the conclusion of the 15 minutes, the timekeeper will announce "time" and the team must conclude their presentation. No one will be permitted to exceed the allocated 15-minute time limit. If a team's presentation is completed prior to the 15-minute limit, the team should announce that they have completed their presentation.
- H. Once the presentation begins, no one will be permitted to interrupt the presentation in any manner while the presenting team has the floor.

- I. No team members of participating teams are allowed to attend the presentation of any other competing team unless their team has already been eliminated from the competition. If any team member violates this rule, the entire team is disqualified. Note-taking is prohibited.
- J. Two (2) graduate teams and two (2) undergraduate teams will advance to the final round of the competition and will be announced following the initial round.
- K. The finalists are not allowed to watch any of the other finalists' presentations preceding their own.
- L. The teams presenting in the final round will only have access to the same materials that were used in the initial round presentation. No modifications of any kind may be made to the presentation.
- M. The score received in the initial round presentation will not count in the evaluation of the presentation in the final round.

VII. Question-and-Answer Guidelines

- A. Each team will be asked questions by judges at the conclusion of their presentation.
- B. The question-and-answer session will last at most five (5) minutes for the initial round and the final round. Therefore, responses should be succinct.
- C. All team members are required to participate in the question-and-answer session.

VIII. Judging Criteria

- A. Each panel will consist of at least two (2) judges. The panels should be composed of diverse, high-level executives.
- B. Teams will be judged on their analysis of the case, responsiveness to the prompt, the executive summary, and presentation skills. Judges will focus on the viability of the strategies and the flow of the presentation. This includes content, organization, and the demonstration of logical thinking. In addition, the team must be able to answer questions promptly, concisely, and accurately. Executive summaries will be evaluated on their utility as stand-alone documents that reflect the analyses and resulting recommendations for the organization.
- C. All judging decisions are final once posted.

IX. Feedback

- A. Each team may request their team's scores and summary of written feedback from their presentations upon completion of the event evaluation form. Teams will not receive this information without a complete evaluation from each team member.