

# Keith Greer, Esq.

He is a counselor to the profession,  
defender of podiatry,  
champion of common sense.

BY DEVON GLAZER, DPM

Some careers leave a mark. Others leave a legend. For decades, C. Keith Greer, Esq. has been the legal backbone of podiatric medicine, a trusted advisor, fierce advocate, and calming presence for physicians navigating some of the most complex regulatory waters in healthcare.

Keith began representing podiatrists almost at the exact moment many of today's leaders were entering the profession themselves. As Dr. Ross Taubman reflects, "Keith started representing podiatrists about the same time I became one. Having gone to school and doing my residency in California meant Keith was ever present in my early years teaching us how to stay out of trouble. My last years working at PICA afforded me the opportunity to work with him firsthand,

defending our colleagues. I believe there are few non-DPMs who have



Keith Greer, Esq.

unmatched commitment to protecting both patients and practitioners.

*"I believe there are few non-DPMs who have contributed more to our profession." —Taubman*

contributed more to our profession. Fair winds and following seas, Keith."

That contribution cannot be overstated. Keith's career has been defined by integrity, clarity, and an

He has guided countless physicians through investigations, contracts, audits and crises, often before they even realized trouble was coming.

Yet despite the gravity of his work, Keith is known for his humor

as much as his brilliance. Ask anyone how Keith is doing, and the response is always classic Greer. As Luke Cicchinelli and Dr. Tom Elardo put it, "How are you doing?" "Kicking ass, taking names, and the blood on the floor isn't mine, so it's a good day."

But if there is one phrase that truly captures Keith Greer, it is the two words he has delivered with perfect timing in more meetings, phone calls, and legal battles than anyone can count. According to Dr. Jeff DeSantis, Keith's signature line, and the one that absolutely belongs on his headstone, is simply, "Amen, Brother."

And just as iconic is the way Keith often chooses to end a conversation. From the author's perspective, I have always loved how Keith will end some board room moments with "be well," it embodies his spirit of wanting all of us to be happy.

For those reading this, whether you realize it or not, Keith Greer has touched your life. His influence reaches far beyond any single case, contract, or meeting. He has always possessed the rare ability to tell you when you were wrong, show you how to make it right, even when you did not want to hear it, and somehow still leave you feeling better for having heard it.

Keith is the kind of person you trust when everything is on the line. He is the superhero of our profession, the one you know will

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# **California Labor Laws 2026: What Medical Offices Must Know**

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# Disclosures

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Attorney C. Keith Greer, Esq., is the President and Lead Trial Attorney for the Law Offices of Greer & Associates, APC, Lead California Defense Counsel for the PICA, and the Chief Executive Officer of NOVUS Revenue Solutions, Inc. He is also General Counsel for the CPMA and ABPM.

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# Learning Objectives

1. Recognize top CA/Federal employment law risks in physician practices and how to avoid liability.
2. Distinguish employee vs. contractor/locums status and choose compliant structures.
3. Implement recent law updates (leave, wages, cannabis, restrictive covenants) through policy and training.

# Pay basics: minimum wage + exempt salary thresholds

- **Statewide minimum wage is \$16.90/hour as of Jan 1, 2026.**
- **Los Angeles County is \$17.81/hour rising to \$18.47 July 1, 2026.**
- **City of Los Angeles will be \$18.42/hour effective 7/1/26.**
- **Most “exempt” (salary) classifications must earn at least \$70,304/year in 2026** (this is the “2× minimum wage” salary floor for many exemptions).

**Why it matters in clinics:** misclassifying “office manager,” “lead MA,” “billing supervisor,” etc. is a very common wage-and-hour problem.

# Healthcare minimum wage (SB 525): may apply depending on what you are

- California has a **separate healthcare worker minimum wage of between \$18.63 to \$24.00 per hour** that applies only if you're a **covered "health care facility"** and the worker is providing or supporting healthcare services.

**Important nuance for doctors' offices:** DIR's FAQ notes some workers **may not be covered** (example: certain services for a **physician group with fewer than 25 physicians** that isn't otherwise covered).

If you're affiliated with a hospital/clinic system, dialysis clinic, etc., you should treat this as a **must-audit** item.

# Overtime + timekeeping (non-exempt staff)

- California overtime rules are strict, and **timekeeping accuracy** is a litigation magnet (rounding, off-the-clock charting/admin work, missed premiums, etc.). Even small practices should run clean policies + audits because wage claims scale quickly.
- Daily/weekly overtime basics (high-level)
- Timekeeping pitfalls in clinics:
  - “Quick charting” after clock-out
  - prep/closing duties off the clock
  - travel between locations
- Action item: timekeeping policy + manager training

# Meal + rest breaks (and premium pay if missed)

- Non-exempt employees generally must receive:
- **Meal period:** 30 minutes, duty-free, when working >5 hours (with limited waiver rules); and
- **Rest breaks:** 10 minutes every 4-hour period, midperiod preferred.
- Missed/late/noncompliant breaks can trigger **premium pay** exposure.

# Pay stubs (wage statements) + recordkeeping

- California requires detailed **itemized wage statements** and retention rules; wage-statement errors are a frequent class/PAGA claim driver.
- Required pay stub elements (high-level).
- **Typical errors:** hours, rates, employer info, sick leave lines, deductions.
- Penalties: \$50 for the first pay period with a violation and \$100 per employee for each later pay period, up to a \$4,000 cap per employee, plus costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

# **Paid sick leave (statewide) and required postings/notices**

- As of **Jan 1, 2024**, employers must generally provide **5 days / 40 hours** of paid sick leave statewide (subject to accrual/carry rules and local ordinances that may be more generous). Must also **post paid sick leave poster laws** and related updates.
- **City of Los Angeles:** 48 hours paid sick leave.
- California statewide minimum: 40 hours or 5 days.
- Sick leave accrues at 1 hour per 30 hours worked.
- Unused leave carries over, can limit to 72 hours (LA city) and 80 hours (CA)
- No carryover is employer gives full amount up front each year.

# Final paychecks (termination vs. quit) + vacation payout

- If an employee is **discharged**, **all wages due are owed at termination**, and “all wages” include **earned, unused vacation**. Final-pay timing mistakes trigger “waiting time” penalty risk.
- Legally required remaining paid sick leave expires upon termination.
- Waiting time penalties: full days pay for each day late, up to 30 days.

# Leave rights: CFRA (family/medical leave)

- Covers leave for employee's own serious health condition, family care bonding with a new child.
- Eligible employee generally must have: 12 months of service, with 1,250 hours worked in the prior 12 months.
- Applies to California employers with 5 or more employees.
- Covered employers should maintain compliant leave policies, manager training, notice/posting, and practices reinstatement procedures.

# Harassment prevention training (and discrimination rules)

- California requires **harassment prevention training** for employers with **5+ employees: 1 hour (non-supervisory) and 2 hours (supervisory) every 2 years.**
- Medical offices often have higher exposure because of close quarters, hierarchy, and patient-facing situations—training + reporting procedures matter.

# Lactation accommodation (space + time; not a bathroom)

- Employers must provide **reasonable break time** and a compliant **private location** (generally **not a bathroom**) for lactation needs. For small clinics with limited space, this is a common “we didn’t realize” violation—plan a compliant room/location.
- Break time obligations (pump time run concurrent, no extra pay).
- Space requirements: private, not a bathroom; near work area.
- Small-office solutions (convertible room, scheduling protocols)
- Action item: written lactation plan + signage/access.
- Penalty: \$100 per day.

# Independent contractor / misclassification risks

- California has strong enforcement around **employee vs. independent contractor** classification.
- **ABC test**
- A: worker is free from the hirer's control and direction;
- B: worker performs work outside the hirer's business; and
- C: worker is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, or business of the same kind.
- **Borello test:** multifactor – control, who supplies tools, how paid, is work regular business, length of employment, profit/loss.
- Penalties (including Medicare issues)

# **“Workplace Know Your Rights Act” annual notice (new in 2026)**

- California now requires a **standalone written notice** of specified workers’ rights **by Feb 1, 2026 and annually thereafter**, and for **new hires at hire** (SB 294).
- **Workers’ compensation rights.**
- **Right to notice of immigration inspections** under Labor Code section 90.2. Protection against unfair immigration-related practices.
- **Right to organize a union, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment rights.**
- **New legal developments** the Labor Commissioner decides are material.
- **A list of agencies that enforce** the rights described in the notice.
- **Employees designate emergency contact – Due March 30<sup>th</sup>.**
- Penalties: \$500 employee/day.

# PAGA (Private Attorneys General Act) exposure (and reforms)

- **Private Attorneys General Act in California.** It lets an aggrieved employee bring a lawsuit to recover civil penalties for Labor Code violations on behalf of the State of California and other affected employees, rather than only for the worker's own damage.
- PAGA remains a major driver of California wage-and-hour litigation. The practical takeaway for a medical office is the same: **tight payroll + break + wage statement compliance** is your best defense.

# “Stay-or-pay” / repayment agreements (new in 2026)

- Effective **Jan 1, 2026**, **AB 692** significantly restricts many agreements that require employees to repay **bonuses, relocation, training costs**, etc., when they leave.  
This can impact common healthcare recruiting/retention structures.
- Prohibited actions: required payment of debt to the employer, a training provider, or a debt collector; allowing the employer or collector to restart or begin collecting a debt because the employment ended; , imposing a penalty, fee, or cost because the worker’s employment or work relationship ended.
- Signing bonus exempt under strict conditions (5-day attorney notice, no interest, prorated, 2-year SOL).
- Penalty: greater of \$5,000 per worker or actual damages.

# If you want the fastest “doctor’s office” compliance win

- Audit **exempt vs. non-exempt** roles against the **\$70,304** 2026 salary floor .
- Audit **employee vs. independent** contractor agreement.
- Audit **meal/rest break compliance** + missed-break premiums.
- Audit appropriate sick pay rules being applies.
- Audit **wage statements** and timekeeping.
- Confirm whether you’re a **covered healthcare facility** under the healthcare minimum wage rules.
- Implement the **SB 294 “Know Your Rights Act” annual notice** process immediately if you haven’t already.

# References

California SB 294

California SB 525

California AB 692

California Labor Code

California Private Attorneys General Act