



# News Release

Media line: (916) 206-7777

@CoveredCANews

media@covered.ca.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Covered California Welcomes Deborah Reidy Kelch to Its Board of Directors**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Deborah Reidy Kelch has been named the newest member of Covered California’s Board of Directors after her appointment by the Speaker of the California Assembly. She fills the seat recently vacated by the departing Sumi Sousa. Her term on the board will run through Jan. 1, 2029.

Kelch’s career spanned more than four decades, in which she worked as a health policy researcher and recognized expert before retiring in 2020. She served for 15 years as a policy and fiscal consultant to the California Legislature, including as a senior consultant and chief consultant to the Assembly Health Committee. She has been a legislative aide to multiple elected officials, staff to the Assembly and Senate committees on aging, and budget staff with the Legislative Analyst’s Office.

“Deborah spent her career working tirelessly to improve equitable access to health insurance for Californians and brings a breadth of experience in research, policy and advocacy to the board,” said Covered California Executive Director Jessica Altman. “As we continue to navigate ongoing challenges and changes to federal health policy, we are thrilled to have Deborah’s vast knowledge and dedication to help us meet our mission of providing high-quality health insurance for all Californians.”

For nearly two decades, Kelch was also the owner and principal of Kelch Policy Group, where she led research and authored numerous health policy reports, articles and projects across the health care landscape. Her consultation with state agencies included providing leadership, analysis and technical assistance to California policymakers during the state’s implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, now known as Covered California.

“I am honored to join the Covered California board during this critical time for health care and coverage,” Kelch said. “I devoted my entire career to expanding and improving health insurance in California. The recent federal cuts require us to be focused, creative and strategic so we can preserve hard won gains as much as possible, especially for those historically left out and left behind.”

(more)

Kelch was also the founding executive director of the Central Valley Health Network, a consortium of multi-site community health centers serving 17 California counties. From 2016 to 2020, she served as executive director of Insure the Uninsured Project (ITUP), a California-based health policy think tank that focused on expanding health care access and coverage through research and stakeholder engagement.

Kelch graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles and holds a master's degree in public policy and administration. Now in retirement, she writes poetry and fiction, is a member of the Sacramento branch of the California Writers Club and volunteers with local community organizations.

There is no compensation for the position, but Kelch may receive a per diem and reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses.

### **About Covered California**

Covered California is the state's health insurance marketplace, where Californians can find affordable, high-quality insurance from top insurance companies. Covered California is the only place where individuals who qualify can get financial assistance on a sliding scale to reduce premium costs. Consumers can then compare health insurance plans and choose the plan that works best for their health needs and budget. Depending on their income, some consumers may qualify for the low-cost or no-cost Medi-Cal program.

Covered California is an independent part of the state government whose job is to make the health insurance marketplace work for California's consumers. It is overseen by a five-member board appointed by the governor and the Legislature. For more information about Covered California, please visit [www.CoveredCA.com](http://www.CoveredCA.com).

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