



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 15, 2021

Covered California Launches New Television Ad Campaign to Reach Uninsured Californians During the COVID-19 Pandemic

- [New television ads began airing today](#) in California's biggest media markets, in both English and Spanish, to let uninsured Californians know that they still have time to sign up for health insurance.
- The ads support Covered California's new special-enrollment period, which runs through May 15, in response to the ongoing pandemic.
- The special-enrollment period allows anyone who is uninsured and eligible to enroll to sign up for health care coverage immediately.
- Covered California's new ad campaign coincides with President Biden's executive order that established a special-enrollment period in the 36 states served by the federal marketplace, which also begins today.
- An estimated 2.7 million Californians are uninsured, including 1.2 million who are eligible for financial help from Covered California or through Medi-Cal.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California launched a new television ad campaign on Monday to reach uninsured Californians during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ads support Covered California's new special-enrollment period, which started on Feb. 1 and runs through May 15, to let uninsured Californians know that they still have time to sign up for health insurance.

"Taking care of your health has never more important than it is right now, and we want everyone to know that if you do not have health insurance, the time is now to check out Covered California and see if you are eligible for financial help to lower the cost of your coverage," said Peter V. Lee, executive director of Covered California. "You do not want

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to be uninsured right now and anyone who needs coverage – and is eligible to sign up through Covered California – can do so immediately.”

The ads began airing today in California’s biggest media markets, in both English and Spanish, to make sure that consumers know that enrollment is open due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [You can see the ads here](#). Covered California is investing more than \$6 million over the next few months to encourage consumers to check out their options. Digital ads have been appearing online since Feb. 1.

“Californians will be seeing ads from both Covered California AND the federal government for the first time in four years,” Lee said. “We look forward to not only working with the new administration to get the word out that now is the time to enroll in affordable coverage, but also building on the Affordable Care Act to move us forward to coverage for all.”

The new special-enrollment period allows uninsured individuals to sign up for coverage without needing to meet the normal qualifying life events, such as recent loss of coverage or moving. Anyone who meets Covered California’s eligibility requirements, which are similar to those in place during the annual open-enrollment period, can sign up for coverage through May 15 and have their coverage begin on the first of the following month.

“Every Covered California plan is comprehensive, covering everything from preventive care to mental health,” Lee said. “It’s safe, it’s secure, and in just minutes you can find out if you are eligible for financial help and the options available in your area.”

Many Still Need Coverage

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to endanger the lives of Californians across the state. The most recent data shows 3.4 million people have been infected and the death toll is nearly 47,000.

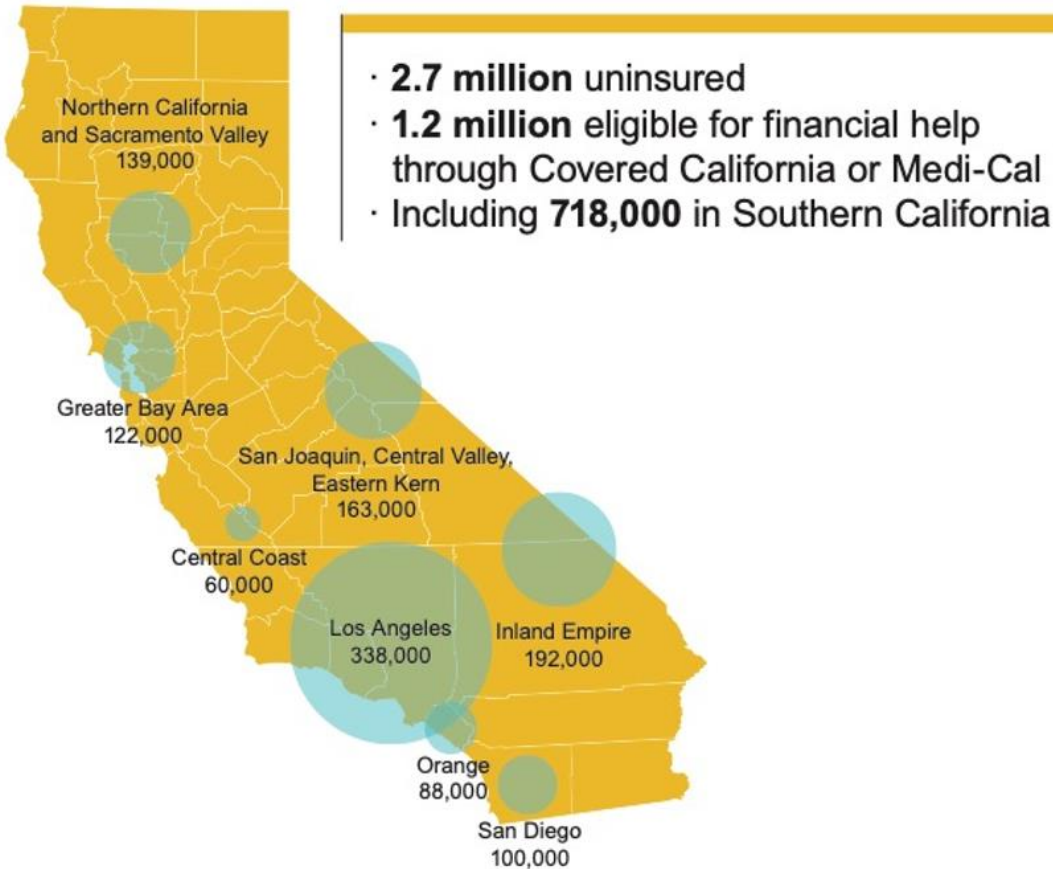
The most recent data available shows an estimated 2.7 million Californians remain uninsured, including a projected 1.2 million who are eligible for financial help through Covered California or for low-cost or no-cost coverage through Medi-Cal. The largest portion of these uninsured who are eligible for help are in Southern California, with an estimated 718,000 people living in the Los Angeles, Inland Empire, Orange and San Diego metro areas (see Figure 1: Where California’s Uninsured Who Are Eligible for Financial Help Live).

“The biggest hurdle to health insurance remains affordability, but most people who are uninsured do not know they are eligible for financial assistance, which is why everyone should just take a few minutes to check out their options,” Lee said. “In just a few minutes you can see what your options are and find out if you qualify for financial assistance that helps bring the cost of coverage within reach.”

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Nearly 90 percent of Covered California’s enrollees, or about 1.4 million people, receive financial help that lowers the cost of their monthly premium by an average 80 percent.

Figure 1: Where California’s Uninsured Who Are Eligible for Financial Help Live



Of those receiving financial help, almost half — more than 660,000 — benefit from the state subsidy program launched in 2020 to make coverage more affordable, including 46,400 middle-income consumers who were previously ineligible for assistance because they exceeded the federal income requirements.

Federal Special-Enrollment Period

Covered California’s new television ad campaign coincides with [the start of a new special-enrollment period for the 36 states who operate in the federal marketplace](#). The federal special-enrollment period is the result of President Joe Biden’s executive order which reopened federal health care marketplaces from Feb. 15 to May 15 due to the pandemic.

In addition, [the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services plans to spend \\$50 million on outreach and education](#) to promote the special-enrollment period and encourage enrollment.

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“We applaud President Biden’s actions and his commitment to do the national outreach that is essential to fostering more enrollment,” Lee said. “Leaning in to help those who are uninsured get the financial help they need to get covered has never been so critical.”

Shop and Compare

Those interested in applying for coverage can explore their options — and find out whether they are eligible for financial help — in just a few minutes by using the [Shop and Compare Tool](#) at CoveredCA.com. All they need to do is enter their ZIP code, household income and the ages of those who need coverage to find out which plans are available in their area.

Another important reason to sign up is that California’s individual mandate penalty remains in place for 2021. Consumers who can afford health care coverage, but choose to go without, could pay a penalty when filing their state income taxes in 2022. The penalty is administered by California’s Franchise Tax Board, and could be as much as \$2,250 for a family of four.

Staying Safe While Getting Help Enrolling

Covered California also continues to support COVID-19 safety precautions — including wearing a mask, washing your hands and watching your distance — as well as contact-free enrollment over the phone or online.

Consumers can safely find out if they are eligible for financial help through Covered California, or low-cost or no-cost Medi-Cal, and see which plans are available in their area by using the CoveredCA.Com [Shop and Compare Tool](#). All they need to do is enter their ZIP code, household income and the ages of those who need coverage and they will see the options available in their area.

Covered California is also working with more than 10,000 Licensed Insurance Agents who help Californians sign up and understand their coverage options through phone-based service models.

Those interested in learning more about their coverage options can also:

- Visit www.CoveredCA.com.
- Get free and confidential assistance over the phone, in a variety of languages, from a certified enroller.
- Have a certified enroller [call them](#) and help them for free.
- Call Covered California at (800) 300-1506.

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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.

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