



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Covered California Begins Renewal of More Consumers Than Ever Before and Announces Final 2021 Rate Change at All-Time Low of 0.5 Percent**

- *Covered California is starting renewal of the largest number of consumers in its six years — with more than 1.5 million consumers being notified they have until Dec. 15 to finalize their 2021 plan choice.*
- *After going through regulatory review, Covered California's final statewide weighted average rate change is a new record-low of 0.5 percent for the upcoming 2021 plan year, after being revised down from the preliminary change of 0.6 percent.*
- *Covered California also unveiled a new [CoveredCA.com](https://www.coveredca.com), including an updated Shop and Compare Tool, where consumers can see their 2021 options, find out whether they are eligible for financial help to lower the cost of their monthly premium **and** see if they are eligible for coverage for the balance of 2020.*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — With the start of Covered California's open-enrollment period just a few weeks away, the exchange announced that the renewal process for a record number of enrollees is now underway — with more than 1.5 million Californians eligible to renew their coverage. In addition, the preliminary rate change that Covered California previously announced in August has been revised downward to a new all-time low of 0.5 percent for the 2021 plan year.

“Covered California heads into the upcoming open-enrollment period with more consumers than ever, and we will be doing so with the lowest rate change in our history,” said Peter V. Lee, executive director of Covered California. “California has built on and strengthened the Affordable Care Act, and right now this means that Californians facing a pandemic and recession are finding the security of having access to quality, affordable health care coverage.”

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The latest data shows that Covered California had a record 1.5 million enrollees in June of 2020. When compared to historical data, Covered California's highest enrollment total in October, which is when the renewal process begins, was 1.3 million in 2018. Current enrollees can begin renewing their coverage now, and they have until Dec. 15 to finalize their 2021 plan choice. People who do not actively select a plan for 2021, will be renewed in their current plan, so they do not suffer a gap in coverage.

"During a pandemic and recession, it is no surprise that Covered California is seeing record enrollment, because we are a safety net to help people get quality health care coverage," Lee said.

### **New Record-Low Rate Change**

Covered California also announced that after the reviews by the California Department of Managed Health Care and the California Department of Insurance, the statewide weighted average rate change was revised downward from 0.6 percent to a new record-low of 0.5 percent.

The lower rate change is the result of reduced rates for Health Net's EPO and PPO products, which are subject to review the California Department of Insurance, in Contra Costa, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Marin, Mariposa, Merced, Monterey, Napa, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Tulare and Yolo counties (see Table 1: California Individual Market Rate Changes for 2021 by Rating Region).

Consumers both on and off the exchange benefit from Covered California's competitive marketplace, which allows them to shop for the best value and benefit from lower increases. In addition, many consumers can save more by shopping and switching to a lower-cost health plan. With the reduction in the statewide average rate change, the average rate change for unsubsidized consumers who shop and switch to the lowest-cost plan in the same metal tier is now -7.4 percent, which means many Californians can get a lower gross premium if they shop and switch. The average rate change varies by region and by an individual's personal situation.

Nearly nine out of every 10 consumers who enroll through Covered California receive financial help — in the form of federal tax credits, state subsidies, or both — which help make health care more affordable. California's state-specific enhanced subsidies, which were introduced for the first time in 2020, are benefiting about 590,000 enrollees in Covered California and are available again for both new and renewing members in 2021.

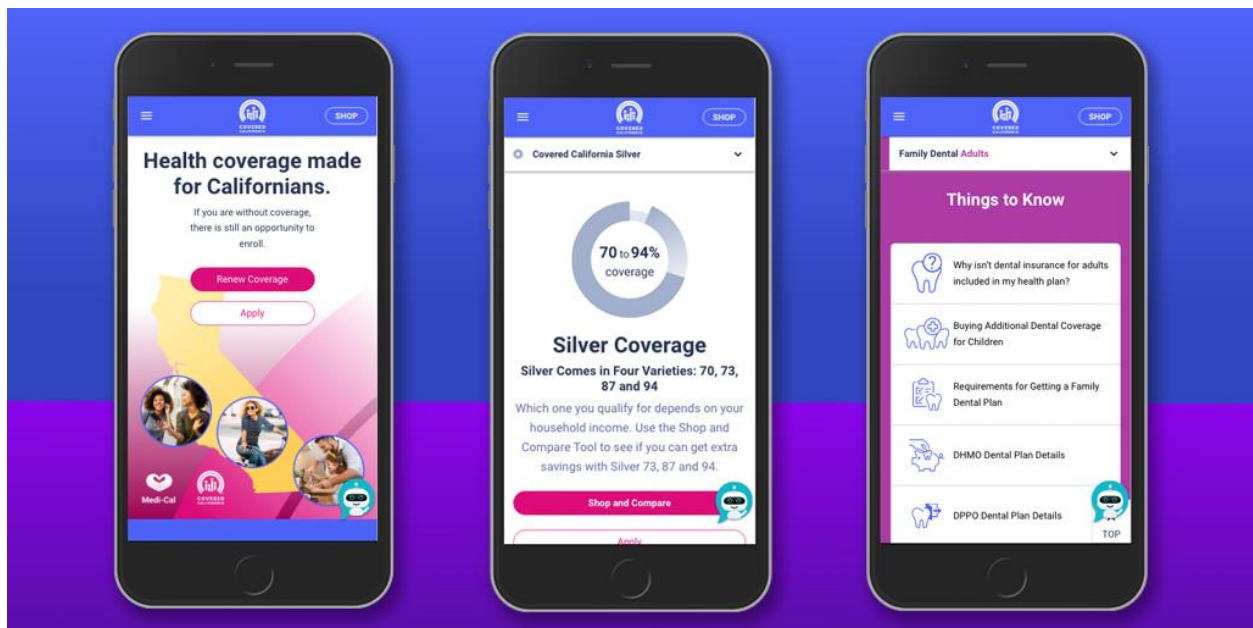
"The bold policy choices made in California to build on and strengthen the Affordable Care Act have led to a very competitive market that is full of choice for consumers," Lee said. "Covered California continues to provide stability and lower costs in the face of national uncertainty in health care."

In 2021, all 11 carriers will continue offering products across the state, and two companies will expand their coverage areas, providing increased competition and consumer choice. Nearly all Californians (99.8 percent) will have two or more choices and over three-quarter of Californians (77 percent) will have four or more choices.

## Improved Website and Consumer Tools

In order to further help new and renewing consumers, Covered California also overhauled its website, [www.CoveredCA.com](http://www.CoveredCA.com), to make it easier for people to learn about their health insurance options and sign up for quality coverage.

The upgrades include a modern redesign, more-intuitive navigation, condensed and simplified language and enhancements in accessibility and mobile responsiveness. The improvements mark the first complete overhaul of the website since the exchange opened in 2013.



“The new and improved version of CoveredCA.com is built to help Californians find the best health insurance option, no matter what device they are using,” Lee said. “In this day and age when more and more people are conducting business on their phones and tablets, these upgrades will make it easier for them to get the information they need and to sign up for the health care coverage they deserve.”

The new website is the result of extensive user testing and feedback from consumers, internal program staff, the Department of Health Care Services and various stakeholders. Testing with real users began in early 2017 and continues to be conducted at every stage of design and development. The design was led by Covered California’s Office of Communications and Public Relations and functional development was led by Covered California’s office of Information Technology.

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Video b-roll of the new website is available for download [here](#).

Current enrollees and those interested in applying for coverage can explore their coverage options — and find out whether they are eligible for financial help — in just a few minutes by using the website’s [Shop and Compare Tool](#). 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.

### **Open Enrollment and Opportunities for Enroll Now**

Open enrollment for the upcoming year will begin Nov. 1, 2020, and run through Jan. 31. Open enrollment is the one time of the year where eligible consumers cannot be turned away from coverage for any reason. Covered California will be launching a new ad campaign on Nov. 9 and has budgeted \$157 million for marketing, sales and outreach during the current fiscal year — an increase of more than \$30 million from last year.

In addition, consumers who need coverage earlier may be eligible for the special-enrollment period that is currently underway. Consumers who experience a qualifying life event, such as: losing their health care coverage, losing their job, suffering a loss of income, moving or being a wildfire victim, could be eligible to sign up for coverage that begins in November or December.

“When the worst is happening in health care, we want to make sure that people have a path to coverage, whether it is through Covered California or Medi-Cal,” Lee said.

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

- Visit [www.CoveredCA.com](http://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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**Table 1. California Individual Market Rate Changes for 2021 by Rating Region**

Rating Region	Total enrollment <sup>1</sup>	Avg. rate change	Shop and Switch <sup>2</sup>
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>1,533,250</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>- 7.4%</b>
<b>Region 1</b> Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne and Yuba counties	<b>57,360</b>	2.6%	- 0.4%
<b>Region 2</b> Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties	<b>55,310</b>	2.3%	- 1.8%
<b>Region 3</b> Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado and Yolo counties	<b>90,260</b>	1.8%	- 2.4%
<b>Region 4</b> San Francisco County	<b>36,960</b>	1.4%	- 3.7%
<b>Region 5</b> Contra Costa County	<b>52,890</b>	1.9%	- 2.6%
<b>Region 6</b> Alameda County	<b>74,170</b>	2.4%	- 0.7%
<b>Region 7</b> Santa Clara County	<b>62,740</b>	5.6%	- 5.5%
<b>Region 8</b> San Mateo County	<b>27,870</b>	2.0%	- 2.8%
<b>Region 9</b> Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties	<b>28,270</b>	0.0%	- 3.0%
<b>Region 10</b> San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Mariposa and Tulare counties	<b>78,270</b>	4.2%	1.4%
<b>Region 11</b> Fresno, Kings and Madera counties	<b>37,190</b>	-0.1%	- 3.0%
<b>Region 12</b> San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties	<b>69,230</b>	2.3%	- 2.2%
<b>Region 13</b> Mono, Inyo and Imperial counties	<b>14,960</b>	- 2.6%	- 4.7%
<b>Region 14</b> Kern County	<b>20,330</b>	- 0.2%	- 2.8%
<b>Region 15</b> Los Angeles County (northeast)	<b>197,030</b>	- 1.1%	- 10.7%
<b>Region 16</b> Los Angeles County (southwest)	<b>237,690</b>	- 2.1%	- 13.4%
<b>Region 17</b> San Bernardino and Riverside counties	<b>135,930</b>	0.4%	- 9.9%
<b>Region 18</b> Orange County	<b>143,460</b>	0.5%	- 11.5%
<b>Region 19</b> San Diego County	<b>113,340</b>	- 1.5%	- 13.3%

<sup>1</sup> Effectuated enrollment for coverage in the month of June 2020: See [https://hbex.coveredca.com/data-research/library/active-member-profiles/CC\\_Membership\\_Profile\\_2020\\_06\\_R83120.xlsx](https://hbex.coveredca.com/data-research/library/active-member-profiles/CC_Membership_Profile_2020_06_R83120.xlsx) for full data profile.

<sup>2</sup> Shop and Switch refers to the average rate change a consumer could see if they shop around and switch to the lowest-cost plan in their current metal tier.

**Table 2: California Individual Market Rate Changes by Carrier<sup>i</sup>**

<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Weighted Average Rate Change</b>
Anthem Blue Cross	6.0
Blue Shield of California	- 2.4
Chinese Community Health Plan	- 1.3
Health Net	2.8
Kaiser Permanente	1.0
LA Care Health Plan	- 4.6
Molina Healthcare	- 3.8
Oscar Health Plan of California	7.6
Sharp Health Plan	- 0.5
Valley Health Plan	9.0
Western Health Advantage	- 2.6
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.5</b>

**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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<sup>i</sup> The weighted average rate change refers to the overall average throughout the state. Actual rate changes for consumers may vary based on their personal circumstances, the area they live in, and their plan’s metal tier.