



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Covered California's Iconic Bus Tour Rolls into San Francisco to Promote Health Insurance Enrollment Ahead of Final Deadline

- *Covered California's bus tour promotes enrollment and encourages consumers to see if they are eligible for financial help in obtaining quality health insurance.*
- *The San Francisco visit coincides with the release of Governor Gavin Newsom's budget which focuses on making health care more affordable through increased financial help and a state individual shared responsibility provision.*
- *Consumers have through Jan. 15 to sign up and select a plan, through Covered California or directly with health plans, for Feb. 1 coverage.*
- *An estimated 1.1 million uninsured Californians are eligible to enroll in Covered California and research shows that 82 percent of uninsured consumers surveyed, who are eligible for financial assistance, do not know that they qualify.*

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — Covered California began its second leg of its statewide bus tour on Thursday, visiting San Francisco to encourage consumers to sign up for health care coverage. The tour resumes during the final week of the current open-enrollment period. Consumers have through Jan. 15 to sign up for coverage, which is earlier than in previous years, when open enrollment ran through the end of January.

“Covered California wants make sure consumers know that this year's deadline is earlier than it has been in the past, and they must take action in the next week in order to get the peace of mind and protection they deserve in 2019,” said Covered California Executive Director Peter V. Lee. “We know that life can change in an instant, and it's important to have health coverage when it does.”

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The second leg of the bus tour — which will visit the Central Valley, Orange County, Los Angeles and San Diego after San Francisco — comes on the same day that Governor Gavin Newsom released his budget which focuses on making health care more affordable through increased subsidies and a state individual shared responsibility provision.

“We have made so much progress as a state, helping millions of people get access to quality care through Covered California and Medi-Cal,” Lee said. “We applaud the Governor’s focus to lower the cost of coverage and increase help for those struggling with rising costs, which will help California reach the goal of universal coverage.”

The tour will feature individuals who have been enrolled through Covered California since the exchange first opened its doors. Local dance crews will also be depicting the idea that life can change in an instant, which ties to Covered California’s award-winning advertising campaign that features ads showing individuals slipping down stairs, falling off a ladder, getting in a bicycle accident and cutting one’s hand in the kitchen.

[Watch and download time-lapse video of the Covered California bus being wrapped.](#)

“Dance transcends culture, language and age,” Lee said. “These performances from around the state will help Covered California encourage enrollment using a medium that resonates with Californians.”

The San Francisco dance at The Grand Theater will be performed by MusEffect and be led by choreographer Jessica Starr, who recently was named the “next generation breakout artist of the year” by the World Choreography Awards.

In addition to the live performances during the bus tour, the dances will be captured on video and shared through social media and on [Covered California’s website](#).

“Californians will be able to share these dramatic performances with their family and friends,” Lee said. “We hope the videos spark conversations and get people interested in seeing how affordable it can be to get quality coverage.”

Affordable Coverage

Covered California’s current enrollees pay an average of \$5 per day for their health insurance, with many paying far less thanks to the financial help that is available.

“Covered California’s research shows that four out of five of the uninsured consumers we surveyed, who are eligible for financial help, either do not know or do not think they qualify,” Lee said. “You can get a quote within a minute by using our [Shop and Compare Tool](#), so even if you have checked before, check again and do not leave money on the table.”

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While each situation is different depending on a consumer’s income, one out of every three Covered California consumers could purchase a Silver plan — which provides the best overall value — for \$50 or less per month. Nearly three out of five consumers could get a Silver plan for \$100 or less per month.

Even consumers who currently purchase their coverage off-exchange directly from a health carrier could benefit from financial help through Covered California. Two recent analyses estimated that roughly 30 percent of consumers enrolled in off-exchange coverage are potentially eligible for financial help that would lower the cost of their net premiums.

The Remaining Uninsured

Since first opening its doors in 2014, Covered California has helped cut the state’s uninsured rate to a historic low of 6.8 percent. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows there are an estimated 2.7 million remaining uninsured consumers in California. However, an estimated 59 percent of the remaining uninsured are not eligible for coverage due to their immigration status. When you take that into account, roughly 1.1 million Californians are currently eligible for coverage in Covered California or Medi-Cal.

Table 1: Remaining Uninsured by Metro Area in 2017

California Metro Areas	Uninsured	Estimated Eligible for Coverage
Bakersfield	67,173	27,541
Fresno	74,842	30,685
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim	1,141,590	468,052
Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura	71,580	29,348
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario	351,398	144,073
Sacramento-Roseville-Arden-Arcade	114,572	46,975
San Diego-Carlsbad	249,592	102,333
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward	209,695	85,975
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara	82,876	33,979

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017

“Nine out of ten Covered California consumers receive financial help, which saves them an average of 80 percent off the price of their coverage,” Lee said. “The savings mean more money in your pocket and peace of mind for you and your family.”

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Life Can Change in an Instant

Covered California data also shows that when life does change in an instant, it can be extremely costly. In 2017, Covered California consumers were protected from a wide variety of medical claims: More than 11,000 were diagnosed with either breast, lung or prostate cancer; 22,000 consumers fractured, dislocated or sprained their arm or shoulder; nearly 3,000 suffered a lower back injury and 1,600 were diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes with complications.

Diagnosis or Injury	Number of Covered California Claims in 2017	Potential Cost of Care Without Coverage*
Breast cancer	7,701	\$78,536
Lung cancer	1,306	\$260,866
Prostate cancer	2,335	\$72,180
Broken, dislocated or sprained arm or shoulder	22,158	\$11,559
Lower back injury	2,784	\$13,822
Type 2 diabetes with complications	1,616	\$54,724

*Source: California Healthcare Compare

“Life can change in an instant, and Covered California members were protected from medical bills that totaled in the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands and even millions of dollars,” Lee said. “No one wants to face a million-dollar medical bill alone, which is why you need health insurance, and a plan through Covered California to protect you and your family when you need it.”

Five Years Strong

As Covered California prepares to enter its sixth year as a marketplace offering affordable health insurance for Californians, long-term enrollees say the effect of the coverage has been life-changing. Those enrollees will be featured at events across the state and highlighted at bus stops during the open-enrollment tour.

Among the five-year enrollees are:

- A Sacramento man who was born with a heart condition. While his pre-existing condition never caused him any issues, it prevented him from getting health insurance.
- An Oakland woman who says Covered California saved the lives of her four children, who have health conditions including asthma to autism.

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- A Los Angeles-area woman who runs a thriving marshmallow-manufacturing business. She followed her dream to start the business only because she was able to buy health insurance on the individual market. Before the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, she was not eligible due to a pre-existing condition.
- A business owner who operates a collision-repair shop in Pleasanton. He decided to get health insurance for his employees through Covered California for Small Business. He said this employee coverage helps him attract and retain the best workers.

Getting Help Enrolling

Enrollment continues through Jan. 15 with coverage that will begin on Feb. 1.

Those interested in learning more about their coverage options should go to www.CoveredCA.com, where they can get help to enroll. They can explore their options and find out if they qualify for financial help by using the Shop and Compare Tool. They can also get free and confidential enrollment assistance by visiting www.coveredca.com/find-help/ and searching among 700 storefronts statewide or 16,000 certified enrollers who can assist consumers in understanding their choices and enrolling, including individuals who can assist in other languages. In addition, consumers can reach the Covered California service center by calling (800) 300-1506.

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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