



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Consumer Interest Surges as First Key Deadline Approaches for Covered California and the Individual Market

- *More than 150,000 new consumers selected a plan through Dec. 12.*
- *Consumer interest is surging, with more than 28,000 consumers selecting a plan during the past three days.*
- *Consumers must sign up by Dec. 15 in order to have their coverage start on Jan. 1, 2019. Open enrollment in California continues through Jan. 15.*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California announced today that 150,191 new consumers signed up for coverage through Dec. 12. Consumer interest is once again surging ahead of a key deadline, with more than 10,000 people signing up on Wednesday, and more than 28,000 selecting a plan within the past three days.

“Deadlines matter, and once again Covered California is seeing tens of thousands of people signing up for coverage now so that they can be covered at the start of the year,” said Covered California Executive Director Peter V. Lee. “Californians who sign up by Dec. 15 can rest easy knowing that they will be covered on Jan. 1 with a quality plan that will protect them and their families.”

Unlike the federal open-enrollment period, which ends on Dec. 15, consumers can continue to sign up with Covered California through Jan. 15, 2019. Consumers who select a plan after Dec. 15 will have their coverage start on Feb. 1.

California is one of six states across the nation, representing a quarter of the U.S. population, which have an open enrollment period that extends beyond Dec. 15.

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In addition to the 150,000 new consumers who have signed up for coverage during the current open-enrollment period, 1.2 million people have renewed their Covered California plan for 2019.

“Covered California continues to see strong interest, but we are seeing new enrollment that’s about 10 percent lower than last year, which we largely attribute to the removal of the individual mandate penalty,” Lee said.

Roughly 1.1 million uninsured Californians are currently eligible for coverage in Covered California or Medi-Cal. Covered California’s research shows that four out of five uninsured consumers who are eligible for financial help either do not know or do not think they qualify. Consumers can find out if they are eligible for financial help and see which plans are available in their area by using the [Shop and Compare Tool](#).

“Consumers can find out in just a few minutes if they are eligible for financial assistance that can help bring quality coverage within reach,” Lee said. “Nine out of 10 Covered California customers receive financial help, which saves them an average of 80 percent off the price of their coverage.”

Covered California data shows that more than 50,000 of its members were either diagnosed with or treated for cancer in 2017. Another 22,000 members fractured, dislocated or sprained their arm or shoulder.

“Being covered means you are protected from medical bills that can range from tens of thousands of dollars into the millions,” Lee said. “Take a moment to check your situation and options; you may find out that coverage is more affordable than you think.”

The average Covered California enrollee pays about \$5 per day for coverage, but many pay far less. One out of every three Covered California consumers who receives financial help can purchase a Silver plan — which provides the best overall value — for \$50 or less per month. Nearly three out of five of these consumers can get a Silver plan for \$100 or less per month.

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

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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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