



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2020

Covered California Sees More Than 123,000 Consumers Sign Up for Coverage During the COVID-19 Pandemic

- *More than 123,000 people have signed up for coverage through Covered California since March 20, when the exchange announced a special-enrollment period in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- *The accelerated pace of sign-ups is nearly 2.5 times higher than the level Covered California saw during the same time period in 2019.*
- *Overall, nearly 200,000 people have enrolled in quality health care coverage through Covered California since open enrollment ended on Jan. 31.*
- *Consumers can enroll in as little as 30 minutes, either through CoveredCA.com or over the phone with the help of one of Covered California's thousands of Certified Insurance Agents or enrollers.*
- *In addition, Medi-Cal enrollment is open year-round for consumers who qualify.*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California announced on Wednesday that 123,810 people had enrolled in health care coverage since the exchange announced a special-enrollment period in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pace of sign-ups during this time has been nearly 2.5 times higher than the level seen during the same period in 2019.

“When the worst is happening in people’s personal economic lives, we want to make sure that Californians know they can have the peace of mind that comes with quality health care coverage,” said Peter V. Lee, executive director of Covered California. “Whether Californians have lost job-based health insurance coverage, or they were uninsured when this pandemic began, our doors are wide open to help them get coverage through either Covered California or Medi-Cal.”

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The enrollment data covers the period from March 20, when Covered California opened the health insurance exchange to any eligible uninsured individuals who needed health care coverage amid the COVID-19 emergency, to May 16. Anyone who is uninsured and 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 June 30.

Special-Enrollment Period

Every year Covered California provides eligible consumers the opportunity to sign up for health care coverage, outside of the traditional open-enrollment period, if they experience a qualifying life event. These can include events like losing your health care coverage, moving, getting married or having a baby. In addition, this year Covered California offered a special-enrollment period for consumers who were unaware of the new state financial help or the new state penalty for not having health insurance.

Overall, since Covered California ended its open-enrollment period on Jan. 31, 191,380 people signed up for coverage through May 16, which is nearly two times as many as seen during the same time period as last year.

New Consumer Outreach

Covered California is also sending out a new fact sheet to help consumers understand their options if their jobs or health care coverage have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The fact sheet, which is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), is being distributed to Covered California’s top Certified Insurance Agents as well as local city chambers and association groups throughout the state.

The fact sheet, seen at the right, answers some frequently asked questions about Covered California, Medi-Cal and COBRA. In addition, it helps guide consumers through the enrollment process so they can get the health care coverage they need during this pandemic.

Signing Up for Health Care Coverage

Consumers can easily enroll through [CoveredCA.com](#) and find out whether they are eligible for financial help through Covered California or if they are eligible for no-cost or low-cost coverage through Medi-Cal. People who sign up through Covered California will have their coverage begin on the first day of the following month. Those eligible for

(more)

Lost your job? You can get health coverage!

Since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis, millions of Californians have filed for unemployment benefits, including many who lost their job-based health coverage. If your job was affected by COVID-19, or if you lack income because your hours were cut or you're no longer working, Covered California is here for you.

Can I get health coverage now?

Yes
Get Covered

You do not have to wait for open enrollment. A special-enrollment period is underway now that allows you to enroll in a health plan through Covered California, and Medi-Cal is open for enrollment year-round.

How do I enroll?

- 1 Go to the Shop and Compare Tool at CoveredCA.com.
Compare coverage options and costs before you enroll.
- 2 Enter your household income to see if you can get financial help.
Nearly nine out of 10 Californians who enroll do.
- 3 Choose a health plan that is the best fit for you and your family.
If you need help, call (800) 300-1506.
- 4 Pay your first bill.
Your coverage begins on the first day of the following month.
- 5 You're covered!

What about COBRA?

Your employer may offer health coverage through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). COBRA allows you to continue your job-based coverage, but you'll most likely have to pay the portion your employer used to pay, plus an administrative fee. Even if you are already enrolled in COBRA, you are eligible to enroll in health coverage through Covered California during open enrollment, or by using a special enrollment period. Through June 30, 2020, you can enroll in health insurance through Covered California by using the COVID-19 special enrollment reason. You can also apply for Medi-Cal anytime throughout the year without a special enrollment reason.

Can I compare COBRA and Covered California coverage?

To compare the cost and benefits of Covered California coverage with what you pay for COBRA, use our Shop and Compare Tool before making a decision.

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Medi-Cal can have coverage that is effective retroactively to the first day of the month from when they submitted their application.

In addition to enrolling online, consumers who need health care coverage can visit Covered California's [Find Help](#) page to get assistance over the phone from one of Covered California's thousands of Certified Insurance Agents. The "[Help on Demand](#)" feature allows consumers to get a call back from a certified agent or a trained enrollment counselor.

"In this time of social distancing, people should know that health insurance is only a phone call away," Lee said. "Consumers can get free and confidential assistance from certified agents or one of Covered California's trained professionals while remaining safe and protecting themselves and their families."

Consumers can easily find out if they are eligible for Covered California or Medi-Cal, and see which plans are available in their area, by using the [Shop and Compare Tool](#) and entering their ZIP code, household income and the ages of those who need coverage.

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.

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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