MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

California is leading the charge for expanding coverage and reforming our nation’s insurance system.

On Oct. 1, we opened our doors for business with a series of statewide launch events, which started with early-morning interviews and the kickoff at the Rancho Cordova Service Center and ended with the grand celebration at Union Station in Los Angeles. Go to our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CoveredCA) to see photos of the launch events.

For all of us on the front lines launching this momentous change, we understand that Oct. 1 was not the finish line; it was the starting line of a long-term, multi-year effort. Yes, there were and will be bumps along the way, but as President Barack Obama has said, “Stand and be proud!”

The president is right — we should all “Stand and be proud.” With a job this big, this ambitious and this complex, our success depends on the passion, strength and active engagement of each of you and our partners in communities across the state. That was true before we opened our doors to the public, and it is even more true given how successfully we launched.

I want to thank the hundreds of our staff at Covered California for their dedication and commitment to make the “impossible” possible. and those at the Service Centers in Rancho Cordova and Contra Costa for taking thousands of calls.

When I toured around the state — with colleagues and friends from the Department of Health Care Services, community groups and counties — I knew that you stood with me. Thanks again for all your hard work and for being part of history.

I look forward to working together in the days, weeks and months to come. Go team!

Sincerely,

Peter V. Lee

Covered California Is Open for Business!

On Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2013, Covered California — the state’s marketplace for health care coverage — opened for business, providing Californians and small businesses access to quality, affordable health care coverage from major health insurance carriers.

The official launch started with an opening day at the Service Center in Rancho Cordova and kicked off a six-month open-enrollment period. The launch included the announcement of the redesigned Covered California website at CoveredCA.com and other exciting news. Read the News Release (bit.ly/1bvt35) for details.

Information related to open enrollment are available at CoveredCA.com:

- Enrollment Forecasts, Reporting Schedule and Background Data (PDF) (bit.ly/177r6x5)
- CoveredCA.com Launches with Best Practices for Consumers (PDF) (bit.ly/1cn1A8c)
Enrollment Kicks into Full Swing
Since open enrollment began Oct. 1, 2013, consumers have been logging in by the thousands on a daily basis to Covered California’s website at CoveredCA.com to determine if they are eligible to enroll and if they qualify for federal premium assistance. Interest from uninsured Californians has been overwhelming and strong. In the first two weeks alone, Covered California’s Service Center assisted more than 100,000 callers, and more than 94,500 applications were started online by consumers.

Hurry! Time is running out soon!
Consumers must enroll by Dec. 15, 2013, and pay the initial premium payment by the due date to receive coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2014. There are still millions more uninsured consumers who have not heard about Covered California or are confused about their health care options. By the end of our open-enrollment period on Mar. 31, 2014, our goal is to have enrolled between 500,000 and 700,000 subsidy-eligible Californians.

We can’t do this alone and need everyone’s help — especially yours. This effort also includes the Certified Educators, Certified Enrollment Entities and Counselors, city and county health workers, nonprofits and a host of other trusted organizations. We are calling out to our partners to schedule and host enrollment events across the state in the remaining months of 2013. This is important to engage and educate the public about Covered California and help them protect their greatest asset in life: their health. For guidance on setting up an enrollment event, refer to the Partners Toolkit — Enrollment Event Planning Guide at bit.ly/1bmWAtF (PDF) on CoveredCA.com.

Consumer: Beware of Scams!
With open enrollment in full swing, eligible consumers are now looking to enroll in health insurance plans offered through Covered California. Though many individuals and community-based organizations are spreading the word about Covered California health plans, only individuals specially trained and certified by Covered California — and with proper identification — are authorized to help with enrollment. These individuals include:

- Covered California Service Center employees.
- Covered California Certified Enrollment Counselors.
- Covered California Certified Insurance Agents.
- Covered California Certified Plan-Based Enrollers.
All Covered California certified personnel must clear fingerprinting and criminal background checks and pass a certification exam before they can help with enrollment. Local county human services or social services employees are not certified by Covered California, but can help to enroll consumers into both Medi-Cal and Covered California health plans.

Be careful about sharing your personal information. Larry Hicks, an information officer at Covered California said, “If you did not schedule an appointment, and someone shows up at your door and wants to enroll you, be wary.” To verify if an individual is truly a certified Covered California representative, consumers can call the Covered California Service Center at (800) 300-1506 or look it up on our website at https://www.CoveredCA.com/enrollment-assistance/. For more ways to prevent fraud or scams, read the article “Watch Out for Scammers” (bit.ly/1g7yx9c) and the Covered California Office of Consumer Protection’s Frequently Asked Questions about Consumer Protection (bit.ly/1aPaq7P).

Covered California is taking fraud prevention very seriously. It recently launched a new initiative to establish the Covered California Office of Consumer Protection. The purpose of the new office is to protect consumers by monitoring all enrollment activities, investigate fraud and take action when illegal activity or other misconduct is suspected.

Online Tool Kit at Your Fingertips
Great news! Community Outreach Network partners can now download and access the online Partner Tool Kit (bit.ly/16GUbz2r). Some of the resources include:

- Covered California 101 Presentation Slides
- Printable Materials
- Covered California Fact Sheets
- Service Center Numbers (13 language lines)
- Covered California Logos
- Brand Style Guide
- Link to Covered California
- Insurance Plans Booklets
- YouTube Videos and Ads

In addition, we are making a small quantity of printed collateral materials available to our Community Outreach Network partners by mail. However, collateral materials are limited, and we can only send them to committed Community Outreach Network partners with a signed and executed memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreement. To order collateral materials, please fill out the Collateral Material Request form (bit.ly/1g7rgWT).
Innovative Outreach to Young Americans

By Tamika L. Butler, Esq.
California Director, Young Invincibles

Young Invincibles, a national nonprofit organization committed to insuring young adults between the ages of 18 and 34, recently launched the Healthy Young America campaign to get young adults informed about the changes coming to health care and help them get insured.

Got health care questions? We've got the answers! Our website, at health.younginvincibles.org, provides the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (bit.ly/14aaWPH) about getting access to coverage. If you don't see your question, you can just ask because we update our answers regularly to make sure that we are a reliable source of health care information for young adults.

The website is also home to a number of fact sheets giving young people the state-specific information they need about health care. Californians can find a road map to coverage (PDF) (bit.ly/1aKUeG4) and statistics (PDF) (bit.ly/1g7BfeM) on the uninsured rates of young Californians.

Our new mobile app (bit.ly/RB3lCr) for iPhone and Android — Health Care Finder — helps young adults discover health care options and find local health care providers. It even has an FAQ section to answer questions. The glossary of common health care terms will help young adults navigate a system that is new for many of them.

For those who want to learn about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or how to reach young adults, we also give presentations all over California. Our presentation provides a detailed explanation of the law, what the law means in practical terms, how the law affects young adults, and innovative outreach practices for getting this information to 18- to 34-year-olds.

As an organization of young adults, for young adults, we know what it will take to make Obamacare a success for our generation. We are building a base of young adult volunteers to help educate our peers. To learn more and join our Healthy Young America campaign or become a volunteer, follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook.

For more information about Young Invincibles, contact Joshua Bloom, the California organizing director, at Joshua.Bloom@YoungInvincibles.org.

A Mighty Bunch of Volunteers

By Bonnie London, RN
Sacramento Mighty Oaks

As a local grassroots organization, Sacramento Mighty Oaks (a group that consists of former volunteers with Organizing for America, President Obama’s re-election campaign) is committed to and passionate about the passage and implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

We started as a small group with just four volunteers in May 2013, but it quickly grew to 50 volunteers in the last three months. Through our collaborative partnership with the University of California, Davis, Center for Reducing Health Disparities — one of Covered California’s outreach and education grant recipients — we were able to get 11 volunteers trained and certified by Covered California as Certified Educators. Our volunteers represent a diverse group of individuals who come with specialized skills, language fluency, interests and ties to many underserved populations, both in Sacramento and around the state.

One of our volunteers, Rees Donneson — a Covered California Certified Educator who is also an AARP member — has helped to provide training to other AARP volunteers to do community outreach in California. Another volunteer, Dr. Susan McGinty, a retired professor of California State University, Sacramento, (CSUS) began by doing presentations to students in the classrooms and is now working with the CSUS administration to develop campus-wide outreach. Yet another volunteer, Gloria Powell, through her successful partnership with the Sacramento Public Library, will conduct ongoing, free workshops and seminars to the public at 28 local libraries throughout Sacramento. We look forward to continued growth and opportunities yet unimaginable.

It’s my pleasure to support the work of Covered California as a Community Outreach Network partner. The spirit of camaraderie and goodwill among the cooperating organizations is positive and uplifting. The greatest reward, though, comes from working in the communities, on the ground, and directly helping people. The joy, relief and gratitude expressed by people who benefit from the Affordable Care Act is inspiring and an honor to witness. For a list of our events, go to conta.cc/18MGxYA.

To learn more about us, go to our Facebook and Twitter pages.
How to Engage Consumers Using Twitter

Using Twitter is an effective way partners of the Community Outreach Network can get the word out about Covered California. It is a great way to engage consumers in conversations about affordable health care and to promote community and outreach events. Some of you may already be tweeting, while others may be new to the world of Twitter. To help you get started, check out “How to Engage Consumers Using Twitter” (PDF) (bit.ly/16hefEF).

Five easy steps to start tweeting:

2. Find others to follow. You may go to the #Discover button at the top of Twitter and type a word into the search engine to find people and organizations to “follow.”
3. Start tweeting. Tweets are limited to 140 characters. Compose a concise tweet about your event. Use hashtags (#) to categorize information, such as #CoveredCA or #GetCovered. Mention others in your tweet by using the @symbol with their Twitter user name so that you get the attention of someone you’d like to see your tweet. For example, if you use @CoveredCA, we will notice.
4. Add photos to your tweets. A picture is worth a thousand words. Take a photo and upload it to www.twitpic.com and attach it to your tweet message.
5. If you see something you like or want to share, retweet it on your Twitter account to let others know.

For help with tweeting, contact Twitter’s Help Center at www.support.twitter.com or email Anne Williams at Anne.Williams@covered.ca.gov. We hope to see you on Twitter and look forward to retweeting your posts!

ABOUT COVERED CALIFORNIA

Covered California is the state’s marketplace for the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Covered California was charged with creating a new health insurance marketplace in which individuals and small businesses can get access to affordable health insurance plans. With coverage starting in 2014, Covered California will help individuals determine whether they are eligible for premium assistance that will be available on a sliding-scale basis to reduce insurance costs or whether they are eligible for low-cost or no-cost Medi-Cal. Consumers can then compare health insurance plans and choose the plan that works best for their health needs and budget. Small businesses will be able to purchase competitively priced health insurance plans and offer their employees the ability to choose from an array of plans and may qualify for federal tax credits. Covered California is an independent part of the state government whose job is to make the new market work for California’s consumers. It is overseen by a five-member board appointed by the Governor and the Legislature. For more information on Covered California, please visit CoveredCA.com.

CONTACT US:

CoveredCA.com
info@hbex.ca.gov
(800) 300-1506

Upcoming Events

For information on upcoming events, go to bit.ly/HhRPtH

Other Important Dates

Nov. 21, 2013
Board meeting

Dec. 19, 2013
Board meeting

Dec. 15, 2013
Last day to enroll for coverage beginning January 1, 2014

We Want to Hear from You

Is your organization dedicated to sharing the mission and vision of Covered California? Have you or your staff organized a successful event that you want to share with us? What are some ways or strategies that have been effective in reaching out to the uninsured or underinsured population in your community? If you have a story to tell, we’d love to hear from you. Please send your article to Irene Ng at Irene.Ng@covered.ca.gov.