

# Covered California Suspends Small-Business Online Enrollment to Implement Improvements

## *Paper Applications Remain the Conventional Enrollment Vehicle During the SHOP Portal's Redesign*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — In response to requests for modifications and enhancements to the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) portal, Covered California™ announced today that it is suspending this component of SHOP to implement a series of redesigns. Meanwhile, enrollment in SHOP will continue via the industry standard process of using paper applications.

“The SHOP portal was not meeting the needs of agents or small employers and needed improvements,” said Covered California Executive Director Peter V. Lee. “Taking the portal offline will not affect the paper application process, which has been the preferred enrollment method traditionally used by insurance agents in the small-group market.”

The online portal for SHOP enrollment will go offline today, Feb. 12 and is projected to be back online in the fall of 2014. Small-business owners can continue enrolling in SHOP by calling the SHOP Service Center or working with a Certified Insurance Agent.

Representatives of the SHOP Service Center are available 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday at (877) 453-9198. The Service Center can assist both small-business owners and Certified Insurance Agents with paper application enrollments, along with answering questions about existing applications. To date, the vast majority of SHOP enrollments have been submitted using paper applications.

“Certified Insurance Agents are critical partners in SHOP, and we want to be responsive to their input about improvements to the program, including their feedback that retooling is needed in the SHOP portal,” said Lee. “We are committed to ensuring the smoothest possible enrollment experience, and we believe the new version of the online portal will significantly enhance the enrollment process.”

The new version of the SHOP portal is expected to increase the efficiency of service and allow better management of applications, including determination of eligibility, implementing group changes and issuing invoices.

As of Jan. 31, 2014, 571 groups were enrolled in Covered California’s SHOP, representing 4,490 individuals. SHOP is currently processing an additional 200 group applications, representing 1,200 individuals. Small businesses can enroll in SHOP plans year round.

For more information, please check out our FAQ *"What Does Removing the Online SHOP Portal Mean to Agents?"* which will be available on CoveredCA.com tomorrow.