



NEWS RELEASE

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COVERED CALIFORNIA TO GET IMPROVED ONLINE ENROLLMENT

First Significant Upgrade to Website Will Make Signups Even Easier

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California™ is preparing for the first major scheduled upgrade to its website on Nov. 22, which will bring self-service enrollment online for small businesses and further streamline the individual consumer experience.

The suite of upgrades will be in place by Monday, Nov. 25. The enrollment portal will be taken offline for two days prior while the improvements are installed, from late Friday, Nov. 22, to the early morning hours of Nov. 25. The information pages of CoveredCA.com, including the Shop and Compare Tool for individuals, will remain up and running during that time.

Covered California previously anticipated installing the upgrades Nov. 16 through Nov. 19 but delayed that for a week to allow for more strenuous testing of functionality.

The new site will have online enrollment pages for the exchange's Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP), designed for employers with 50 or fewer eligible employees. Those businesses can currently register online, check for eligibility and work with licensed Certified Insurance Agents to get quotes. The upgraded site will allow self-service online quoting and enrollment for small employers, aligning SHOP with industry standards for the small-group market enrollments in November and December.

Business owners can also continue to sign up for SHOP through Certified Insurance Agents, or by using paper applications.

Small businesses are not required to buy insurance for their workers, but many business owners recognize the value of offering health coverage to employees. Covered California's SHOP is a way for employers to offer affordable coverage as a tool for attracting skilled workers, and a way to help employees stay healthy and productive.

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Consumers will see some changes in the improved enrollment website to make it more user-friendly, including faster page-loading speeds, smoother navigation paths and changes in text to make questions easier to understand.

Covered California used feedback from individuals, assisters and Service Center representatives to make the improvements, including an optional post-enrollment survey of consumers. Staff also zeroed in on areas in the website where consumers seemed to take longer or abandon the enrollment process.

About Covered California

Covered California is the state's marketplace for the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Covered California, in partnership with the California Department of Health Care Services, 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 helps individuals determine whether they are eligible for premium assistance that is 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 can 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 www.CoveredCA.com.

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