



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 26, 2014

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## **COVERED CALIFORNIA OUTLINES APPLICATION DEADLINES FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT, BRACES FOR INFLUX OF ENROLLEES**

*Enrollees Who Want to Beat March 31 Deadline Rush Should Sign Up Now*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California™ today confirmed its March 31 deadline for open enrollment in an exchange health insurance plan and announced its policies for completing an application for health care coverage.

With five days left to enroll in a Covered California health insurance plan, the exchange is urging consumers to sign up before the deadline if they want to get affordable health care coverage and avoid a tax penalty.

“If you haven’t applied yet, do it now,” said Covered California Executive Director Peter V. Lee. “We are concerned that high numbers of people will come to our doors at the last minute and won’t be able to get enrolled in time. If that happens, consumers face a penalty for not getting insurance, and they may miss out on the peace of mind that comes with coverage.”

Covered California also clarified the process for completing applications for health coverage in 2014.

“Covered California is not extending its deadline for applying for a health plan,” Lee said. “However, we’re committed to helping all those who started an online application to cross the finish line.”

Individuals who start an online application by 11:59 p.m. on March 31, 2014, will have until 11:59 p.m. on April 15, 2014, to complete their application and select a plan. To start an application, the consumer must take at least the following steps:

- Create an online account.
- Fill out all required information on the “Apply for Benefits” page and hit “Continue.” Page 1 contains two required fields (see application screen images online at [http://news.coveredca.com/p/blog-page\\_26.html](http://news.coveredca.com/p/blog-page_26.html)).

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- After hitting “Continue,” individuals will be taken to the “Consent for Verification” page, where they need to click on “Save & Exit.”
- They must return to their online account no later than April 15 to complete the application and select a plan.

Covered California reminds consumers that they must make their first premium payment to the health insurance company by the due date to avoid the tax penalty.

Paper applications must be postmarked by March 31, 2014, to meet the open-enrollment deadline for 2014 Covered California plans. To guarantee coverage beginning May 1, 2014, however, consumers are encouraged to enroll online.

After the end of open enrollment on March 31, consumers may be eligible for Covered California’s special enrollment period, which can be triggered by one of several “qualifying life events,” as defined under the Affordable Care Act. Some of those qualifying events are:

- Getting married.
- Having a baby or adopting a child.
- Permanently moving to a new area that has different health plan options.
- Losing other health care coverage that is considered minimum essential coverage.
- A change in income that would affect an enrollee’s eligibility for financial assistance.

Low-cost or no-cost coverage through Medi-Cal is also available to consumers year-round, and they can check their eligibility and sign up on the Covered California website, through its Service Center or with the help of assisters.

Covered California also operates its Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP) year-round for businesses with 50 employees or fewer.

Covered California’s next open enrollment, for 2015 coverage, will begin in fall 2014.

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## **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](http://www.CoveredCA.com).

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