

Thousands Of Consumers Apply For Health Insurance Through New Covered California Marketplace

Written by Australian Business

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Oct. 8, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Covered California™ received tens of thousands of enrollment applications during the first week consumers could officially apply for health insurance at the agency's online marketplace, as well as those newly eligible for Medi-Cal coverage.

"We've started strong," said Executive Director Peter V. Lee. "The amount of interest and number of applications we've received in the first week underscores the demand among Californians for quality, affordable health care."

Website and Call Center Weekly Report: Oct.1-5

Service volumes

Unique visits to CoveredCA.com

987,440

Call volume

59,003

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Average wait time

15:08 *

Average handling time

16:48

Applications

43,616

Partially completed

27,305

Applications completed with household eligibility determined

16,311

Number of Californians determined eligible for coverage

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28,699

Small Business Health Options Program businesses registered as of 10/8/2013

430

*Average wait time was reduced to less than four minutes by Friday, 10/4/2013.

For the initial week of operations, reflecting Tuesday through Saturday (Oct. 1-5), Covered California's website,

www.CoveredCA.com

, had 987,440 unique visits. Online, 16,311 households completed their eligibility process and were determined eligible for subsidies, Medi-Cal or to enroll in an individual private plan. These household applications contained 28,699 individuals who completed eligibility determination. An additional 27,305 households had partially completed their online application.

At Covered California Service Centers, 59,003 calls were logged over the five-day period.

"It's just the beginning, but these numbers are truly exciting and encouraging," Lee said. Consumers were equally excited about being able to enroll online in Covered California health insurance plans that provide quality and value, and uniform benefits, without worry about pre-existing conditions.

Paul Torrigino of Sacramento enrolled in a Bronze plan for about a dollar per month and said, "Oh my gosh, the insurance has been going up for the last few years like crazy. All our money was going to pay for medical insurance."

In San Diego, the Gedankens are receiving premium assistance of \$1,300 a month on their

Silver plan — roughly half the cost they're paying now.

And Aura Lee Sanchez from Sacramento said when she enrolled, "It felt fantastic to finally get coverage!"

"With almost three months to enroll for coverage effective Jan. 1, the fact that thousands of Californians and hundreds of our small businesses are stepping forward in our first week is a testament to the need for the Affordable Care Act," said Peter Lee

Subsequent weekly statistics will be based on a Sunday-through-Saturday schedule. Total enrollment for October will be released in November.

"Covered California is committed to sharing information and will continue to report weekly on the numbers of visits to our website and the number of consumer calls to our Service Centers," Lee said.

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.

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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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