



**CALIFORNIA
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION**

*Providing Leadership in
Health Policy and Advocacy*

December 2, 2014

Dear California Hospital Association Member:

The California Hospital Association (CHA) and Covered California are reaching out to ask for your continued assistance in helping to ensure that every one of your patients understands the quality health coverage options available to them through the Covered California marketplace.

Last year, California hospitals were part of the largest expansion of health coverage across the state since Medicare 50 years ago — an expansion effort led in part by Covered California. California made history — reducing the number of uninsured in our state by 3.4 million and reducing the rate of the uninsured from 22 percent to 11 percent (the largest decrease in the nation). California hospitals played a vital leadership role in communicating with patients about their health coverage options. While the Affordable Care Act is historic and represents a huge expansion of coverage, millions of uninsured Californians remain eligible for insurance. California hospitals will continue to play a critical role in eligibility and enrollment efforts during the current brief enrollment period from Nov. 15, 2014 through Feb. 15, 2015.

Again, it is important news for individuals who cannot afford coverage today or who have been denied because of a pre-existing medical condition. Every California hospital makes efforts to ensure that those who visit their hospital and do not have coverage obtain information regarding the health coverage options available to them. CHA and Covered California want to thank you for these efforts and encourage you to continue spreading the word. Remind your patients and others in your community that the opportunity is now to get the security and peace of mind that comes from being insured, whether it is through Covered California, through Medi-Cal or without financial help on the individual market.

Here's how you can help:

1. Make all your patients aware that open enrollment for Covered California began Nov. 15, 2014, and closes Feb. 15, 2015. The attached toolkit provides valuable and ready-to-use information you can share with your patients. Included in the toolkit is a simple one-page document that you can share with your staff and patients that describes the 2015 open enrollment. Another document shows which plans are offered in each county. If you have any uncertainty regarding the specific plans or products your hospital is participating in, also attached is a current list of plan contacts regarding network status. Call or e-mail the plans directly to confirm your status.
2. If you have a confirmed contract with a Covered California plan to serve the individual market, consider displaying the attached Covered California "I'm In" placard prominently in your hospital so patients know your hospital is participating in one or more of Covered California's plans.

We know there was far too much confusion last year and want to ensure that hospitals, physicians, office staff *and* patients understand the networks and health plans with which your hospital contracts. Again, ensure that you have verified your contracting status for Covered California plans if you are at all unclear (see #1 above).

3. Consider other ways to promote open enrollment in your community, such as including information in community newsletters, participating in local press events or partnering to promote enrollment events. Refer to the best practices and outreach and enrollment strategies provided in CHA's guidebook, *Helping Individuals Obtain Health Coverage Under the Affordable Care Act*, available at <http://www.calhospital.org/health-coverage-guidebook>.

CHA and Covered California share the view that the Affordable Care Act is not just about getting individuals enrolled in coverage; it's about making sure individuals get the care they need. Enrollment is just the beginning; the finish line is to ensure that individuals who enroll have access to the quality care they need and deserve. We know that the initial Covered California marketplace launch was challenging in some areas and that some health plans need to improve their communication with patients, as well as hospitals and physicians. That said, we are pleased that 360 acute care hospitals – representing 95 percent of these hospitals in California – are contracted with one or more of the plans offered by Covered California. We are committed to working together to ensure provider directories are accurate, networks are adequate and consumers and those they depend on — the hospitals and physicians providing their care — have access to clear and accurate information. While it is far from perfect, we believe that Covered California is succeeding in connecting Californians with health coverage. With your continued support, we're looking forward to helping even more Californians in the months and years to come.

Again, we thank you for all that you have done and ask you to help continue our success during this important new health care era. We know that in many ways this year will be more difficult, and there will continue to be bumps along the way. However, we are committed to confronting these challenges quickly, because we know the difference it can make in the lives of the Californians we are seeking to serve.

Sincerely,



Peter V. Lee

Covered California
Executive Director



C. Duane Dauner

California Hospital Association
President/CEO