Health Insurance: It’s Time To Enroll!

Health care reform. The Affordable Care Act. Obamacare. Whatever you call it, health insurance enrollment is upon us. Here in Sacramento, the people at Sacramento Covered are providing information and pathways to health care for local communities. We sat down with Kelly Bennett-Wofford of Sacramento Covered to explore their vision for a healthier Sacramento.

What is Sacramento Covered?
We’re a non-profit organization that has been helping families in the Sacramento region enroll in health coverage and get access to health services for more than 13 years. We were formerly known as Cover the Kids, but after Obamacare became law, we expanded our scope to provide services to the entire family, and changed our name to Sacramento Covered.

What services does Sacramento Covered provide?
Sacramento Covered conducts outreach to help those who are eligible for Medi-Cal and low-cost health plans apply for coverage. But our services don’t stop with the application process — we follow up with individuals throughout the year to ensure that they have access to a doctor, that they are taking advantage of free preventive screenings for themselves and their children, and that they maintain their coverage as deadlines come up for renewal.

In-person outreach is critical to getting uninsured people connected to programs. How do you conduct in-person outreach?
We partner with other community based organizations — schools, churches, community health clinics, employment centers — and receive a lot of referrals from agency partners. We also hold events partnering health care enrollment services with health screenings, immunizations, and other services. Our next event is on October 19, in South Sacramento.

Disease prevention is a hallmark of the Affordable Care Act. What role does preventive health play in the work you do?
We encourage people to take advantage of free preventive services that are available to them, like well-child and well-woman exams. About a year ago we were able to integrate CalFresh enrollment applications into our Medi-Cal applications. By increasing access to healthier foods (through CalFresh), we can create healthier communities.

Is there a maximum income for the individuals you help?
No. Traditionally, we have focused on lower-income families — those in most need — but that is changing as higher-income families are becoming eligible for health coverage through Covered California. We will be working closely with Covered California to enroll individuals in health plans, with subsidies available for people making up to 400% of the federal poverty line.

In Sacramento County, many individuals who are eligible for health care still remain uninsured. How can these individuals get informed and access the services they need?
By calling our hotline at 866-850-4231 or visiting getcovered.ca.com people can learn about the health reform, find out what they qualify for and how to enroll. We have a staff of 20 people who speak five different languages available to answer questions. We have a central office in Antonia at the Sierra Health Foundation, and our staff also goes out to people in their own neighborhoods and in their own languages. The goal is to make enrollment as easy as possible.

Find out how the new health law may benefit you and what you will be eligible for by visiting getcoveredca.com.

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