



NEWS

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Partners across San Mateo County target uninsured “hotspots”

January 31, 2016 is the deadline to enroll in affordable health insurance in 2016

SAN MATEO, Calif. –With the January 31 deadline for Californians to sign up for affordable health insurance fast approaching, a network of agencies, community organizations, and hundreds of individuals across San Mateo County are partnering to help every uninsured resident have access to quality, affordable health insurance.

Residents who do not enroll by Sunday, January 31, 2016 may have to wait until January 2017 to gain access to affordable health coverage and financial assistance. Applying for coverage also helps people avoid having to pay a federal tax penalty, which will increase next year.

With less than four weeks remaining to meet the enrollment deadline, there are still an estimated 29,000 people in the county who are eligible for health insurance who have not yet enrolled and may qualify for financial help. Most of the 50,000 people who enrolled or reenrolled for health coverage in 2015 were encouraged to do so by a family member, friend, or physician.

Uninsured residents tend to be located in geographic “hotspots” across San Mateo County, including East Menlo Park, Redwood City, East Palo Alto, and North Fair Oaks. County outreach efforts are targeting these “hotspots” by partnering with trusted, community-based organizations to enroll local residents. Efforts to raise awareness include posting billboards, distributing flyers, meeting with local businesses and schools, and hosting enrollment events to make it easy for people to drop in and sign up.

“Everyone deserves affordable health insurance and peace of mind that they will be covered when they need it most,” said Srija Srinivasan, San Mateo County Health System Director of Family Health Services and the Health Coverage Unit. “Since the launch of the Affordable Care Act, we’ve made great strides in getting a large portion of our uninsured residents insurance, leaving only a few areas of the county with higher rates of people who are uninsured. We are focusing these remaining weeks on these ‘hotspots’ to make sure people know about all the local options available to them to enroll. Whether it’s in person, on the phone, or online, our enrollment counselors are available to help find the best plans for the person and their family.”

The public is invited to sign up for health coverage at the [Ravenswood Enrollment Fair](#) on Saturday, January 9, 2016 from 9am to 2pm, at the [Ravenswood Family Health Center](#). Congresswoman Jackie Speier will open the enrollment event with remarks about health care issues, and her staff will be in attendance to provide constituent services.

“The Affordable Care Act has opened the doctor’s office door to 22 million uninsured Americans,” said Congresswoman Jackie Speier. “Thousands of San Mateo County residents now have affordable insurance, but there are many more in East Palo Alto and Belle Haven who could qualify for affordable, and maybe even free, coverage. I am excited to be part of this important Covered California event and hope all of East Palo Alto’s residents will take advantage of this opportunity to get health insurance.”

Bilingual enrollment counselors are available to help people sign up at enrollment sites and events before the January 31st deadline. Other upcoming enrollment events include the City of Millbrae’s Health Care and Wellness Fair on Saturday, January 23rd from 9am to 1pm at the Millbrae Community Center. The San Mateo Medical Center will also be extending hours leading up to the enrollment deadline and will be open on Saturday, January 16 from 8am to 4:30pm.

Enrollment events and extended enrollment hours at existing drop-in enrollments sites as well as languages spoken at each center can be found at www.smcgov.org/healthcoverage. Local in-person enrollment assistance is available by calling (650) 616-2002 or 1 (800) 223-8383. San Mateo County residents can also enroll directly through Covered California’s website: www.CoveredCA.com.

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