

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Get Covered 2021 Coalition Applauds President Biden's Executive Order Enacting a National Special Enrollment Period to Provide Americans with Access to Health Insurance

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- *President Joe Biden has moved aggressively to address COVID-19 and provide access to quality affordable health coverage. His Executive Order enacting a Special Enrollment Period from Feb. 15 through May 15 linked to vitally important marketing investments is critical to reach those who are uninsured.*
  - *An estimated 16 million Americans are uninsured right now, even though they are eligible for financial help through their Affordable Care Act marketplace, or free coverage through Medicaid.*
  - *There are 6.8 million uninsured but eligible for marketplace financial assistance living in 36 Federally-Facilitated Exchange states. The previous administration failed to prioritize outreach and educate Americans living in these states, which resulted in 1.8 million fewer new enrollee sign-ups in 2020 than was the case in 2016.*
  - *Now is not the time to be sick and uninsured. The President's Order, combined with action by State-Based Exchanges demonstrates a national commitment to helping people who need coverage the opportunity to get covered right now.*
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**WASHINGTON DC** – COVID-19 has magnified the importance of affordable insurance and accessible health care throughout America to help those who are uninsured as well as the many people who have lost coverage due to the related economic fallout. Get Covered 2021, a broad and diverse national coalition of states, bipartisan elected leaders, consumer and patient groups, health care providers and celebrity ambassadors applauds President Joe Biden's decisive COVID-19 response, which included an Executive Order today declaring a Special Enrollment Period that reopens federal marketplaces from Feb. 15 through May 15. This action is critical and will reverse declines due to the prior administration's lack of commitment to Americans living in those states that relied on the federal government to promote enrollment.

Following are reactions from Get Covered 2021 co-chairs and coalition members:

“This is the right thing to do, and reflects a sea-change with the Biden administration proactively leaning in and prioritizing COVID-19 safety and health care coverage for all Americans,” said Get Covered 2021 Co-Chair and Executive Director of Covered California Peter V. Lee. “The previous administration did nothing to promote coverage for the millions of Americans living in the states that relied on the federal government, which resulted in 1.8 million fewer new enrollee sign-ups in 2020 than was the case in 2016. The new administration is taking decisive action out-of-the-gate to show they are committed to using all the tools of the Affordable Care Act, and aggressively investing in marketing and outreach to get more Americans covered.”

“Reopening the doors for millions of Americans to get coverage has perhaps never been more important than it is right now,” said Laura Packard, Get Covered 2021 Co-Chair and Executive Director of Get America Covered. “We want to ensure that as many Americans as possible have access to quality care and health insurance so that they can get healthy and stay healthy.”

“No one should wait to enroll in health insurance,” said Carrie Banahan, Get Covered 2021 Co-Chair and Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. “Protect your health and tell your family and friends so we can make sure everyone across the country has health insurance during this pandemic and beyond.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Americans from all walks of life, but communities of color are twice as likely to become infected,” said Georges C. Benjamin, MD, Executive Director of the American Public Health Association. “Now more than ever it’s essential for everyone to have access to care, and that starts with having health insurance. We thank the Biden administration for their leadership, and for making health equity a priority, both in the fight against COVID-19 and for the general health and wellbeing of all Americans.”

“As part of our longstanding support for meaningful insurance coverage for all patients, the AMA supported passage of the Affordable Care Act, and we are pleased by the Biden administration actions today to bolster access,” said Susan R. Bailey, MD, President of the American Medical Association. “Opening the ACA exchanges provides a crucial lifeline at a time when people are losing insurance because of job layoffs as a result of the pandemic. We also applaud the administration’s move to eliminate barriers to Medicaid enrollment, which will repair holes in the health care safety net. Taken together, these actions will restore coverage to patients who are victims of the economic fallout of the pandemic.”

“We commend the administration for giving families nationwide the opportunity to enroll in quality, affordable coverage while also investing in outreach and enrollment programs,” said Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association. “Having health insurance can mean the difference between life or death for someone at risk for cardiovascular disease. The COVID-19 pandemic, which poses elevated health risks for people with CVD and other chronic conditions

and may lead to heart attacks and stroke in people who have had the virus, makes it especially important to be covered.”

“Every American deserves access to health coverage, yet millions remain uninsured,” said Rick Pollack, President and CEO of the American Hospital Association. “We simply need to do better in addressing this basic human need, particularly during a global pandemic. By reopening enrollment in the Health Insurance Marketplaces, the Biden administration is helping more Americans get and stay covered.”

The special enrollment period, which will serve the 36 states with federally facilitated marketplaces, will give all Americans more time to sign up for health care coverage without needing to meet the normal qualifying life events Feb. 15 through May 15. The executive order also announced that the federal government will resume investing in marketing and outreach which will help Americans understand their insurance options and get enrolled.

Get Covered 2021 is supported by national health leaders, health care providers, celebrities and a bipartisan array of elected officials. These groups and individuals have reached more than 200 million people through a national social media blitz campaign, promoting the message that financial help is available for millions of Americans to make coverage affordable by sharing the website [GetCovered2021.org](https://www.GetCovered2021.org) (where consumers can be linked directly to enrollment help) and using the hashtag #GetCovered2021.

Get Covered 2021 coalition members include the American Public Health Association, American Heart Association, American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Hospital Association, America’s Physician Groups, American Cancer Society, Mental Health America, National Hispanic Medical Association, the Service Employees International Union, American Federation of Teachers, National Association of Community Health Centers and many more, along with 16 states, the District of Columbia and Get Covered America.

A diverse array of celebrity and athlete ambassadors have also joined on in support, including AJ Andrews, Odell Beckham Jr., Beth Behrs, Tanner Buchanan, Caron Butler, Shilique Calhoun, Charlie Carver, Max Carver, Stephen Curry, Freddy Galvis, Adrian Gonzalez, Mark Hamill, Ken Jeong, George Lopez, Danielle Macdonald, Angel McCoughtry, Alyssa Milano, Bill Pullman, CC Sabathia, Sarah Silverman, George Takei, Bradley Whitford and James Wilks. Ambassadors have provided their support using their unique platforms to educate and encourage people across the country to get covered.

Those interested in learning more about their coverage options can visit [www.GetCovered2021.org](https://www.GetCovered2021.org) or [www.Healthcare.gov](https://www.Healthcare.gov).

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