



Strategy 6: Outreach and Partnering With Key External Stakeholders



Overview and strategy excerpts from:
*Helping Individuals Obtain Health Coverage
Under the Affordable Care Act (2013).*
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Covered California has emphasized the importance of developing relationships with community organizations across the state that have experience in reaching and assisting California's diverse populations, as well as proven success with enrolling consumers in health care programs.¹

Getting Californians enrolled in health coverage requires a multifaceted approach by hospitals, focused on both internal enrollment efforts and building bridges with external stakeholders.

Hospitals commonly conduct extensive outreach and partnering initiatives in surrounding communities with other health care organizations, physicians and other providers, state and county agencies, and community sites such as schools and places of worship. Hospitals also choose to partner directly with Covered California. A description of each type of partnership follows.

PARTNERING WITH PROVIDERS PRACTICING IN THE COMMUNITY

Hospitals often play a leadership role in educating community providers about public and private health coverage options available and the enrollment processes.

One interviewed organization uses training materials to inform physicians in the community about the hospital's eligibility and enrollment services. The materials address the hospital's financial assistance programs, eligibility and enrollment processes, and other topics.

Another organization sends a quarterly newsletter to local obstetricians with a list of the hospital's enrollment services and contact information so they can inform their uninsured patients about the services. The hospital is planning a similar outreach initiative to primary care physicians. Letters to providers will contain detailed information about the options available to patients through Covered California and the Medi-Cal program. Covered California has even made sample scripts available to its certified application counselors.

¹ Peter V. Lee, Vishaal Pegany, James Scullary and Colleen Stevens, "Lessons From California to Promote Stability and Lower Costs in National and State Individual Insurance Markets," (September 2017) http://hbex.coveredca.com/data-research/library/CoveredCA_Marketing_Matters_9-17.pdf



Partnering With the Community

Hospitals often conduct community outreach and education at other locations considered by patients to be trustworthy sources of information such as schools, libraries, city halls and places of worship.

One organization sends bilingual community outreach workers who are familiar with the needs of target communities to county fairs, farmers markets, school registration nights, sporting events, churches, city halls and county parole department programs. The outreach workers are equipped with bilingual materials that explain the different health coverage programs and options.

PARTNERING WITH COUNTY AND STATE PERSONNEL



Public Health Programs

Uninsured individuals access numerous services through public health programs, so they often are targeted for hospital outreach efforts.

An integrated health system in one county describes its population-specific approach involving collaboration with the county public health program. The system trains and employs “promotoras,” who already are known and trusted in the community. They focus on the Latino population, encouraging residents to apply for health coverage programs and assisting with enrollment. For African Americans, specially trained “health conductors” coordinate directly with the system’s financial counselors, helping patients obtain the documentation necessary to apply for health coverage programs.

Medi-Cal Eligibility Personnel

Given the essential role county eligibility personnel play in Medi-Cal and other government enrollment programs, building relationships with the staff of county social services agencies is a key focus of interviewed organizations. Some organizations have excellent interactions with county eligibility personnel, resulting in quicker coverage determinations for their coverage-eligible patients. Others hospitals struggle with counties where varying staffing levels prevent efficient processing of applications due to budgetary constraints.

Developing trusted relationships with county and state personnel is an important strategy to enhance patient access to health coverage. One organization noted that onsite county eligibility personnel work side by side with hospital eligibility staff. The hospital staff monitor every patient whose paperwork has been turned into the state, and meet periodically with the county eligibility personnel to determine progress and status. Another organization noted that the county eligibility personnel assigned to the hospital provide the hospital with updates as soon as information is available.

Through an arrangement with a regional hospital association, one organization has two state Medi-Cal eligibility personnel dedicated to the hospital. One Medi-Cal eligibility specialist speaks Armenian (spoken by half of the hospital's patient population) and the other speaks Spanish (spoken by 30 to 40 percent of the patient population). The eligibility personnel are onsite 40 hours per week, with space and access to necessary office equipment provided by the hospital, offering convenient Medi-Cal application assistance for patients. At the appropriate time, the eligibility personnel are able to interview patients in the emergency department, let them know whether they are eligible for a health coverage program and process applications onsite.

PARTNERING WITH COVERED CALIFORNIA

Covered California offers opportunities for hospitals and other providers to partner to promote each open enrollment period.

Covered California promoted the beginning of its 2018 open enrollment with a 22-stop bus tour visiting 19 cities throughout California, including locations where murals will be painted to attract attention to enrollment locations and promote health. The "Covered in Art" project includes murals painted on the exteriors of health facilities in various cities throughout the state. The goal is to create vibrant and permanent murals that bring the community together in support of health care and to celebrate the importance of being "covered." The Covered in Art project is a living demonstration of the fact that health care is local.

Providence St. Joseph Health partnered with Covered California on this project by providing an exterior wall for a mural at its Community Health, Wellness and Activity Center in Wilmington (at right), which will greet patients when they visit the health center. The mural will reflect the health center's mission to improve the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health of the community.

Salinas Valley Memorial Center was one of many hospitals that partnered with Covered California on its "Spotlight on Coverage" bus tour for a previous open enrollment period. The hospital has more than 2,000 patients with coverage through Covered California.



Tracy Negrete and Peter V. Lee in front of the mural in progress at Providence St. Joseph Health's Community Health, Wellness and Activity Center in Wilmington

In addition, Covered California has developed a toolkit for hospitals, offering ready-to-use information to share with patients and local communities. It includes a variety of resources, including an open enrollment fact sheet, flyers on the financial assistance available through the Covered California marketplace and steps patients can take to apply for coverage. The toolkit is available at <http://hbex.coveredca.com/toolkit/provider-partner/>.

In addition to participating in local press and enrollment events, Covered California urges hospitals to consider other ways to promote open enrollment in their communities, such as through social media and by including information in community newsletters. Covered California has included printable items in the toolkit, as well as graphics for social media outreach and shareable videos.

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