



Closer to health coverage for all Californians

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With the 2019 health insurance open enrollment season in full swing, it's an important time to remind Californians that our health care marketplace is in better shape than some might believe.

While Washington's changes to the Affordable Care Act and calls for a radical upheaval of our health care system may have you confused about the state of health care in California, make no mistake — our state's system is strong and getting stronger.

California continues to lead the nation in reducing the ranks of the uninsured. More than 3.4 million Californians gained coverage through Covered California and expanded access to Medi-Cal, bringing the insured population from [82.5%](#) in 2013 to nearly [93%](#) today.

Californians participating in open enrollment, which began on Monday, Oct. 15, have the benefit of shopping for health coverage in a marketplace that has [three times](#) the national average of participating insurers and ranks in the [top two](#) for health plan choice and competitiveness. Once enrolled, many individuals and families will also be eligible to receive subsidies to help them afford coverage.

Choice and financial support are just a few of the reasons that [84%](#) of Californians say they are satisfied with their health plan. These individuals and families have control of their health. They are hand-selecting coverage from a wide pool of health insurers and provider networks based on their needs and, once enrolled, they have access to top-notch primary care physicians who provide referrals to world-class specialists.

Through these providers, Californians are getting the care they need, such as being able to see their primary care physician within 10 days of making an appointment. Our state's health plans are also covering more [essential services](#) than ever before – providing individuals and families with access to a comprehensive suite of health benefits. That's why [86%](#) of Californians say they are satisfied with their health care.

California's leaders and health care professionals have worked for years to build the health care system we have today. While we recognize there is work left to do – like closing the uninsured gap and bringing down medical costs – it's crucial we don't lose sight of the advancements we've made.

And right now, we're closer than ever before to insuring all Californians. But, to strengthen our system, we need to champion policies that will build it up – not tear it down.

Recognizing that health premiums are driven by the price of medical care, health plans are working hard to tackle the issue head on and bring down the cost of care by aggressively negotiating rates, implementing new wellness programs and backing initiatives addressing the high-priced drug crisis – like California's landmark Rx transparency legislation, SB 17.

These types of efforts are addressing key issues, while leaving the many parts of our health care system that are working in place. We have built the spring-board from which we should launch our efforts to close the uninsured gap and improve affordability. And, the recent kick-off of this year's open enrollment period is a reminder of how close we are to bringing coverage to all Californians.

Ed's Note: *Charles Bacchi is president and CEO of the California Association of Health Plans, which represents health insurers.*