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Covered OC, Orange County United Way Participate in Covered California's OC Healthcare Enrollment Kick-Off

With open enrollment beginning this weekend, United Way, Covered OC and Covered California partner to enroll local residents in vital healthcare programs

IRVINE, CA (November 17, 2014) – Orange County United Way joined forces with Covered OC during the Big Blue Bus Tour Thursday to promote the beginning of the next healthcare open enrollment period, which begins Saturday, November 15.

Covered California Executive Director Peter Lee led an exciting rally to remind residents and partnering organizations of the importance of healthcare coverage for all. Covered California's Big Blue Bus Tour hopes to build excitement, raise awareness and encourage people to sign up during the second enrollment period.

Open enrollment takes place from November 15 through February 15, 2015. The Covered OC collaborative, led by United Way, has succeeded in raising awareness of the need for and driving enrollment in Covered California's healthcare insurance program.

"This collaboration of service agencies, businesses and government representatives has helped to support greater access to and coverage of health," said United Way CEO and President Max Gardner. "Last year more than 130,000 local residents enrolled for healthcare, far surpassing the expected numbers."

During last year's open enrollment, the Covered OC collaborative exceeded its goal of 3,200 signups by 186 percent. This resulted in Orange County ranking second in the state in terms of total enrollments.

Michelle Burroughs, Director of Health and Evaluation for United Way added, "We believe that by strengthening the health of our men, women and children, we can strengthen the health of our overall community. Studies find that improved standards of health lead not only to greater life expectancies, but also to increased overall economic productivity and output. Even minor illnesses can be a major financial burden for people in our community—and health problems in our youth lead to school absences, which is an early predictor for dropping out of high school. In addition to our health care access

strategy increasing access, we are also focused on preventive services, nutrition and greater physical activity.”

Throughout the 2014-15 open enrollment, Covered CA will continue to assist all enrollment entities and grantees across the state in reaching and exceeding their enrollment goals. Locally, organizations across Orange County, including Covered OC, will promote enrollment options through health events, fairs, and expos. Covered OC, Orange County’s regional health collaborative, will be posting events and enrollment entities on their website (www.coveredoc.org) beginning Saturday, November 15.

ABOUT COVERED OC

Covered OC is a collaborative of service agencies, businesses, and government representatives dedicated to supporting successful access to and coverage of health for all Orange County residents. The goals of Covered OC are to:

1. Educate members about changes in the regional healthcare system
2. Coordinate and support outreach, education, and enrollment activities
3. Advocate for resources to fill identified gaps in services
4. Evaluate and assess the outcomes of member activities

ABOUT ORANGE COUNTY UNITED WAY:

Since 1924, Orange County United Way has been working to improve lives and strengthen our community by mobilizing the caring power of Orange County, by focusing on the building blocks for a good quality of life: Education, Income, Health and Housing. By investing in Orange County’s children, families and individuals, we help them create pathways to self-sufficient futures through education and training. In short, we help people help themselves. Through our 10-year initiative “FACE 2024” (an acronym for Fund, Advocate, Collaborate, Educate), United Way is mobilizing local businesses, community organizations, governmental agencies and individuals to make a long-term measurable difference in the lives of local individuals and families. To learn more or to join our movement, visit www.unitedwayoc.org.

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