

# PREPARING FOR COVERED CALIFORNIA

## Big Changes Ahead for Health Plans in 2014

### AVANTPAGE IS ON THE FOREFRONT AS COVERED CALIFORNIA'S INITIATIVES TAKE EFFECT

Since 2011, Avantpage has closely followed the progress of Covered California, California's new health benefit exchange program. We've kept abreast of new developments and provided our clients with information and updates as we've received them. In this special report, we've compiled information and answers to some of **the most pressing language access concerns expressed by health plans**: When should translation efforts be initiated? What written and online materials should be translated, and into how many languages? Are there ACA requirements in place we should be aware of?

The report will help you:

- gain a greater understanding of exactly how Covered California will affect your business
- prioritize your translation and other language access needs as Covered California takes effect
- develop effective project timelines to meet translation requirement deadlines

As a result, you'll **improve your communication efforts** toward LEP individuals, capture a greater share of new health plan prospects, and transform new plan members into lifelong customers.

### HOW WILL COVERED CALIFORNIA IMPACT LANGUAGE ACCESS AND TRANSLATION?

In October 2013, Covered California will begin actively enrolling hundreds of thousands of residents for healthcare coverage. Because of the large amount of new materials and information that must be translated prior to the implementation of Covered California, it is vital that health plan providers have a solid language assistance strategy in place. In fact, a recent article in *The Sacramento Bee*\* stated that the biggest challenge in 2013 for Covered California will be "Overcoming language and social barriers to persuade hundreds of thousands of residents to sign up for subsidized health insurance."

*\*Covered California Boss Must Set Up –Stat!– A New Health Care System, Kevin Yamamura, The Sacramento Bee, December 28, 2012*

### AS A HEALTH PLAN ORGANIZATION, HOW SHOULD YOU INITIATE THE TRANSLATION PROCESS?

Once you've chosen a Language Services Provider to work with, it's wise to start by choosing vital documents in your most crucial languages, and translating these projects first. It's easier to build a "library" of translated documents over time than it is to try to get everything accomplished at once.

Don't lose out on gaining new members through Covered California because your translated documents are not ready. It's certain that other health plans will be there ahead of you, translations in place, ready to take full advantage of Covered California's new pool of enrollees.

## **WILL COVERED CALIFORNIA BE RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSLATING MATERIALS FOR HEALTH PLANS ENROLLED IN THE EXCHANGE?**

Covered California will have its own translated materials for marketing and outreach programs in place to connect with LEP residents, but these materials will not cover information about specific health plans.

Health plan providers will be responsible for translating all online materials, information and documentation into their threshold languages. It is imperative that health plans begin preliminary work now in order to partner with translation providers they trust and begin the translation process.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF HEALTH PLANS ADOPT A "WAIT AND SEE" APPROACH TO CHOOSING A LANGUAGE SERVICES PROVIDER?**

While health plans may be tempted to wait until they know for sure that they are certified as Covered California qualified health plans before starting the translation process, this approach could backfire, causing them to miss out on new enrollees. It makes good business sense to choose your language services provider now, so you can start working together to create a project timeline and complete translation projects. Avantpage makes the planning process an easy, stress-free one that ensures high-quality, accurate health care translations.

## **HOW DOES AVANTPAGE FIT IN WITH HEALTH PLAN TRANSLATION INITIATIVES REGARDING COVERED CALIFORNIA?**

As a translation services vendor that specializes in healthcare, Avantpage can make a significant difference in communication with your Limited English Proficient (LEP) audience. We work with the California Department of Public Health, California WIC program, Delta Dental, Altamed Health Services, Alameda Alliance for Health, MESVision and others, and we are experts at effectively and accurately communicating complex healthcare information to LEP audiences. We can help your organization get a language assistance program up and running, enabling you to take full advantage of new member enrollment opportunities due to Covered California.

## WHAT ABOUT PLANS WITH A LARGE MEDI-CAL AND/OR MEDICARE ENROLLEE BASE?

Enrollment in these government-funded groups is likely to increase substantially due to Healthcare Reform and Covered California. You may already be translating into Spanish and Chinese, but there are other critical threshold languages you should be targeting to reach new members. It will be impossible to grow market share in the very competitive healthcare arena without translating into threshold languages such as Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian (Khmer), Farsi, Hmong, Korean, Russian, Tagalog and Vietnamese, in addition to Chinese and Spanish.

## FINAL THOUGHTS: DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND MARKET SHARE

Covered California represents an exciting opportunity for health plans to reach out to a vast new audience of potential customers. Approximately two million Californians and 300,000 small businesses are expected to purchase insurance through Covered California within its first few years, and the numbers are expected to rise from there. Connecting with this pool of potential customers hinges on clear, accurate communication. You'll need to ramp up translation efforts and implement new strategies in order to present your health benefits plan in a way that is understandable, approachable and appealing to consumers.

If your organization is serious about attracting new business through Covered California, translation strategies will play a key role in your ability to thrive within the highly competitive health plan marketplace. Choose a translation services provider you trust, set the process in motion now and look forward to substantially increasing your market share once Covered California opens for business.

## ABOUT AVANTPAGE

When you choose Avantpage, you are partnering with a specialized, highly qualified healthcare translation provider with extensive knowledge and experience in the industry. Our translations save you time and money, ensure you comply with regulations and help you connect in any language.

For more information on how you can tailor your services to meet the needs of your LEP patients, contact us today! Avantpage can offer suggestions, guidance and information for putting together a comprehensive, cost-effective translation program to help you communicate more effectively, increase your market share and secure new business.