



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0536

January 28, 2014

Peter V. Lee
Executive Director, Covered California
560 J Street, Suite 270
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Lee,

On Thursday, January 23, 2014, I gathered representatives from the organizations housing certified enrollment counselors in my congressional district. The conversation around the table was positive and fruitful. And it remains clear that major gains have been made to maximize enrollments for eligible individuals under the Affordable Care Act. I write to convey to you my strong support for a solution to a concern brought to my attention at this meeting.

Certified enrollment counselors (CEC) in my district are doing a tremendous job identifying the uninsured segment of our population, and conducting direct outreach, eligibility screening, and enrollment. Nearly 10,000 individuals and families have accessed affordable healthcare in my district. But in a geographically large district—such as the one I represent—this outreach and enrollment work most often involves home visits to individuals and families. CECs reported to me that in order to receive clarification or expert assistance with individual applications, they must call the Covered California general customer assistance hotline, which has an average wait time of 49 minutes. One certified enrollment counselor at the January 23 meeting said,

“If I have a whole day of enrollment, I take whatever [questions] I can’t accomplish on my own, compile them, and I wait for first thing the next morning to call [the customer service line] at 7:58AM so I’m first in line when they open at 8:00AM. I’m on the phone with them for 40 minutes with my issues.”

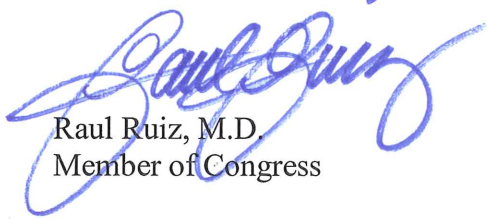
As more counselors become certified, and as outreach and enrollment efforts amplify and accelerate, it becomes even more important to provide the necessary support for our certified enrollment counselors. A similar, dedicated “trouble shooting” hotline was created for the successful Healthy Families Program administered by the State of California. A dedicated support team, known as Bridge Line, has already been created by Covered California to help certified enrollment counselors address technical system problems. This same logic should be extended to support on-the-ground certified enrollment counselors. Therefore, I write to strongly advocate and I ask that Covered California staff a dedicated assistance hotline for certified enrollment counselors.

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Once again, thank you for the hard work you and your team are doing to ensure that all Californians access affordable, quality health care. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff if we can be of any assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Raul Ruiz", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress