

# ChapCare opens health insurance enrollment shop in Pasadena



By [Sarah Favot](#), Pasadena Star-News

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PASADENA >> Nestled among clothing and jewelry stores and restaurants is a unique kind of shop on Colorado Boulevard at the Paseo Colorado where you won't walk out with a shopping bag.

Instead, you can walk out with health insurance coverage.

Community Health Alliance of Pasadena opened the health insurance enrollment shop this month aimed at getting as many people as possible enrolled who are now required to have coverage by March 31 under health care reform known as the Affordable Care Act.

CHAP Care has partnered with other health centers in Los Angeles County and created an initiative called [Cover L.A.](#), which has also rolled out quirky videos that have begun playing on buses throughout the county.

With high ceilings, large windows and soft lighting, the vibe is vastly different from ChapCare's health centers in Pasadena and South El Monte, where people can also have help signing up.

"It's another point of entry for people who want to talk to somebody in person, but don't want to be bogged down with a medical visit," said Steven Abramson, CHAP Care's marketing manager.

"It's a quiet place where you can speak to somebody and then go home," he said.

Since it opened on Feb. 3, the shop has enrolled close to 100 people, Abramson said.

Latinos have been frequent customers. So have people who work full-time and are earning a living wage, who don't qualify for Medi-Cal, but can receive subsidies based on their income as a percentage of the federal poverty line.

In an interview on CBS News, the CEO of Covered California, the state's health insurance exchange, praised the face-to-face model, especially for Latinos.

"(Latinos) are much more apt to sign up in person sitting across the table from someone," CEO Peter Lee said, rather than by phone or online.

Covered California launched a campaign specifically targeted at enrolling Latinos, who make up about half of the state's uninsured.

As of October, Pasadena's Director of Public Health Dr. Eric Walsh said there were about 25,000 city residents who were uninsured.

Since ChapCare's enrollers became certified in November, it alone has enrolled about 600 people at its health centers and enrollment events.

Those who enroll through the shop do not have to plan to choose ChapCare as a provider, Abramson said.

ChapCare plans to keep the shop open beyond the March 31 enrollment deadline, Abramson said, and may open other shops throughout the city.

Abramson said for the next five years, the organization will be focused on enrolling people who now qualify for health insurance coverage.

"The point is people don't have to figure this out on their own and if they do, they're going to get frustrated and they probably can't," Abramson said.

California's health insurance exchange has four tiers and six plan options in each tier for people to choose from.

The exchange's website suffered technical difficulties this week with an unplanned system outage, which put a stop to enrollments.

The shop is located at 316 E. Colorado Blvd. Hours are Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Help is available in English, Spanish and Mandarin.

Call 626-486-9729 to make an appointment. Walk-ins are also accepted.

People can also visit [www.mycoverla.com](http://www.mycoverla.com) to see if they are eligible for coverage.