



Group: Covered California Should Better Track Enrollee Demographics

Tuesday, June 10, 2014

The California Pan-Ethnic Health Network last month **sent a letter** to the Covered California Board saying that the state's health insurance exchange did not effectively collect and release data on those who enrolled in coverage, *HealthyCal* reports.

Letter Details

CPEHN Director of Policy Analysis Caroline Sanders wrote that the exchange failed to ask enrollees about gender identity and sexual orientation and that questions about race, ethnicity and primary language were buried at the end of the enrollment application in a section called "Optional Data."

About 22% of exchange enrollees declined to answer the questions about race and ethnicity, *HealthyCal* reports.

Sanders noted that the non-response rate is much higher than similar state applications. For example, only 4.5% of applicants to Healthy Families, the state's Children's Health Insurance Program, declined to answer such questions, she wrote (Guzik, *HealthyCal*, 6/10).

The CPEHN letter noted that "further information from Covered California on response rates by enrollment channel ... would also be extremely helpful in diagnosing and strategizing about next steps."

The letter also recommended that Covered California:

- Emphasize the importance of data collection during its training of call center staff, agents and certified enrollment counselors;
- Move up questions about race, ethnicity and primary language to the demographic data section on the application;
- Eliminate "English" as the default language and instead make a question about primary language mandatory;
- Ensure that the online and paper applications have the same race and ethnicity questions;
- Reposition the question about ethnicity so that it comes before race and is asked only once; and
- Expand the demographic data questions to include sexual orientation and gender identity (**CPEHN letter**, 5/22).