



# News Release

Media line: (916) 206-7777

@CoveredCANews

media@covered.ca.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 15, 2022

## **Covered California Names Jessica Altman as Its New Chief Executive Officer**

- *Jessica Altman comes to Covered California from Pennsylvania, where she currently serves as the Commonwealth's insurance commissioner, regulating the fifth-largest insurance market in the nation.*
- *Altman brings a wealth of experience and knowledge from serving as chair of the Pennsylvania Health Insurance Exchange Authority and having led the establishment of Pennie, Pennsylvania's state-based marketplace under the Affordable Care Act.*
- *Altman will step into this new role following the planned departure of Peter V. Lee, Covered California's founding executive director, who has led the organization since its inception more than a decade ago.*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California's Board of Directors announced Tuesday the appointment of Jessica Altman as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Altman currently serves as the insurance commissioner for the Pennsylvania Insurance Department, where she is charged with regulating the Commonwealth's insurance marketplace, protecting consumers and ensuring their health insurance needs are met. She will join Covered California with a wealth of experience concerning the Affordable Care Act, having played key roles in the Obama administration during the early establishment and implementation of the law, and as the chair of the Pennsylvania Health Insurance Exchange Authority, where she led the establishment of Pennsylvania's state-based marketplace.

(more)

Altman's appointment follows the September 2021 announcement that Peter V. Lee, Covered California's first executive director, would be leaving after more than a decade of leading the marketplace. Covered California's board, chaired by California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly, undertook a national search for Lee's replacement. After a rigorous recruitment process, Altman was selected and will step in as Covered California's new CEO in early March.

"We have made tremendous progress in California and across the nation as a result of Peter's vision, passion and leadership — and because of the great team he has brought together and our state's commitment to work together on behalf of all Californians," said Ghaly. "That work has improved the lives of millions of Californians and meant that Covered California has served as a national proving ground. Jessica is an impressive leader with significant experience with the Affordable Care Act, marketplaces and fighting for consumers. We look forward to her taking the helm of a solid, dedicated team, and the board is excited about the work she will do to carry forward and build on Covered California's successes."

Altman's experience with the Affordable Care Act, health insurance and marketplaces runs deep. As Pennsylvania's insurance commissioner, she regulates the state's insurance market — the fifth largest in the nation — championing consumer protection and helping to make the state a national leader in the enforcement of mental health parity laws and fighting the opioid crisis. With her knowledge and experience with the Affordable Care Act, Altman has worked to drive down Pennsylvania's uninsured rate to the lowest in state history.

One of Altman's signature accomplishments is the establishment of Pennsylvania's state-based marketplace, "Pennie," which began offering coverage at the start of 2021. Prior to the launch of Pennie, Pennsylvania offered coverage through the federally facilitated marketplace. Altman initiated and led the transition to Pennie, allowing the state to better serve Pennsylvanians, resulting in increased enrollment and a decrease in premiums during its first year of operation.



*Jessica Altman*

"I could not be more honored to accept the position as Covered California's next CEO," said Altman. "Under Peter's leadership, Covered California became a national model for the Affordable Care Act always putting consumers first and maximizing the role of the marketplace to transform health care. I will miss Pennsylvania and am proud of all that we have accomplished together in the Commonwealth. I am also eager to return home, to get rooted with Covered California and its great team, and to help build on its achievements over the last decade."

(more)

Altman joins Covered California at a time when the marketplace has a record-high 1.8 million enrollees, following the swift implementation of the American Rescue Plan under Lee's leadership, and record-low rate changes averaging just over 1 percent over the last three years. Covered California is currently working to enact new, nation-leading health plan contracting policies to hold health insurance companies accountable to improving health care quality and equity. Those policies will be acted upon by Covered California's board on Feb. 17, 2022, and will set landmark quality and equity benchmarks for companies doing business with Covered California.

Over Lee's decade of service, Covered California has served millions of Californians, become the largest state-based marketplace in the nation, and established itself as a leader in both state and federal health care policies. California has had the largest drop in the uninsured rate of any state in the nation; maintained stable, healthy enrollment due to extensive year-over-year investments in marketing and outreach and consumer-centric policies; set standard patient-centered benefit designs improving consumer access to care; and held health insurance companies accountable to high standards of accessible, quality care by enrollees.

"It has been the honor of a lifetime to be a part of the Covered California team, and I am grateful to have been a part of something that has contributed to providing something so special for California and the nation," Lee said. "Jessica is coming into an organization that is in great shape, with a solid foundation to build on as we enter its next chapter. There is still a lot of work to do in the pursuit of universal coverage and improved access to quality care, and I am confident that Jessica and the entire team at Covered California will continue to deliver on the organization's mission. I will be cheering them on every step of the way and look forward to seeing the organization's accomplishments on behalf of consumers for years to come."

In addition to her duties as Pennsylvania's insurance commissioner and chair of the Pennsylvania Health Insurance Exchange Authority Board of Directors, Altman has served in leadership positions with the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, including chair of the Health Insurance and Managed Care Committee, and as co-chair of the Health Insurance Workstream under the Special Committee on Race and Insurance that she helped found, recognizing the need to address health disparities affecting communities of color across the country. Altman serves as a member of the Pennsylvania Governors' Cabinet, and as a member of the Executive Committee of the National Academy for State Health Policy. She grew up in Menlo Park and is a graduate of Cornell University and Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Altman will begin her tenure with Covered California on March 7, 2022, and will earn \$450,000 annually.

(more)

## About Covered California

Covered California is the state's health insurance marketplace, where Californians can find affordable, high-quality insurance from top insurance companies. Covered California is the only place where individuals who qualify can get financial assistance reduce premium costs. Consumers can then compare health insurance plans and choose the plan that works best for their health needs and budget. Depending on their income, some consumers may qualify for the low-cost or no-cost Medi-Cal program.

Covered California is an independent part of the state government whose job is to make the health insurance marketplace work for California's consumers. It is overseen by a five-member board appointed by the governor and the Legislature. For more information about Covered California, please visit [www.CoveredCA.com](http://www.CoveredCA.com).

###