

# Undocumented Student Action Week

Education and Career UndocuDreams Made Possible



## Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Culturally Competent Mental Health Care Access in the Undocumented Community

Mayra Barragan-O'Brien, M.S., LMFT  
Martin Covarrubias M.S.  
Glenn R. Heap M.S., LMFT



## Housekeeping

- The presentations will be available after the event on the Vision Resource Center and the Undocumented Student Action Week website.
- Closed Captioning is available. Please click on the CC icon below to activate the closed captioning.
- Q&A will be available, and presenters will answer questions as time permits.
- Chat is disabled.
- If you require technical assistance, please email [conferences@foundationccc.org](mailto:conferences@foundationccc.org)

# PRESENTERS



**Mayra, MS, LMFT,**  
Mental Health Senior Manager,  
Immigrants Rising



**Martin, MS, Program Manager -**  
RISE Scholars & Educational  
Justice Programs, Rio Hondo  
College



**Glenn, Counseling Faculty –**  
Student Health & Psychological  
Services, Rio Hondo College

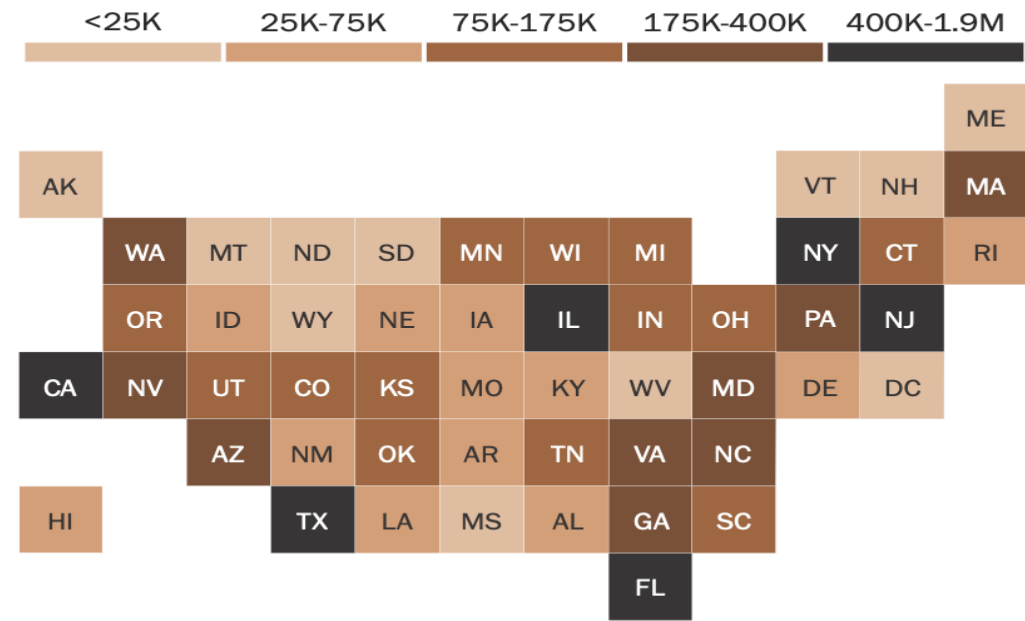
# Agenda

- Overview
- Barriers Faced
- Importance of Representation
- Immigrants Rising Mental Health Career Program
- Mental Health Connector and Wellness Support Groups
- How Rio Hondo College is Addressing Mental Health Needs of Undocumented Students
- Health Care Benefits Available to Undocumented Students with Covered California

# About Immigrants Rising

Immigrants Rising empowers undocumented young people to achieve educational and career goals through personal, institutional, and policy transformation

U.S. unauthorized immigrant population by state, 2021



# Population Overview

- According to the Pew Research Center, in 2021:
  - 10.5 million in the U.S.
  - 1.85 million in California

U.S. unauthorized immigrant population by state, 2021	
<25K	ME, AK, VT, NH, MT ND, SD, WY, WV, DC, MS
25K-75K	RI, ID, NE, IA, MO, KY, DE, NM, AR, HI, LA, AL
75K-175K	MN, WI, MI, CT, OR, IN, OH, UT, CO, KS, OK, TN, SC
175K-400K	MA, WA, PA, NV, MD, AZ, VA, NC, GA
400K-1.9M	NY, IL, NJ, CA, TX, FL
Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on augmented U.S. Census Bureau data. PEW RESEARCH CENTER	





# Barriers

- **General Barriers:**
  - Immigration status
  - Limited income opportunities
  - Risk of deportation
  - Limited access to social services
- **Education-related Barriers (Abrego, 2007):**
  - International student classification
  - Limited financial aid
  - Uncertain future prospects
  - Decline in educational motivation

# Mental Health Care Challenges

- **Barriers and challenges in accessing mental health services (Aggarwal, 2017):**
  - Reduced concerns about mistreatment
  - Shared experiences, identities, and worldviews
  - Provider awareness of relevant stressors/resources
  - Increased client comfort, trust and self-disclosure
- **Clients tend to prefer therapists based on their own racial/ethnic background (Cabral & Smith, 2011; Moore et. al., 2023). The importance of having a provider with shared lived experience includes:**
  - Reduced concerns about mistreatment
  - Shared experiences, identities, and worldviews
  - Provider awareness of relevant stressors/resources
  - Increased client comfort, trust and self-disclosure





# Importance of Representation

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022):
  - 309,000 therapists and
  - 106,000 psychologists in the U.S.
- There is no data on undocumented therapists

# Why Is There a Lack of Undocumented Mental Health Providers?

- Systemic Barriers
- Immigration policies limiting adjustment of status
- 1982: Plyer v. Doe
- 2010: DREAM Act rejection
- Federal aid exclusion
- Independent contracting limitations
- Licensing limitations and requirements
  - SB 1159: SSN or ITIN
  - 3,000 supervised hours
  - Volunteer or be a W2 employee



# Immigrants Rising Mental Health Career Program

# Immigrants Rising Mental Health Career Program

- **Program Overview:**

- First of its kind
- Directly addresses systemic barriers

- **Participants:**

- Are matched with licensed supervisors at a clinical site
- Are volunteers at the site
- Provide pro bono services to the undocumented community
- Receive individual and group supervision
- Engage in monthly professional training
- Engage in a capstone project on entrepreneurship
- Receive a stipend

# Immigrants Rising Mental Health Connector

Immigrants Rising's Mental Health Connector provides undocumented students in California with psychological support.

## Eligibility Criteria:

- Have an undocumented status
- Be enrolled at a California higher education institution
- Be in California during sessions
- Have a tool for online sessions (phone, laptop, etc.)
- Be between the ages of 18 and 45
- Have no health insurance or means to pay out-of-pocket
- Feel comfortable conversing in English

# Immigrants Rising Wellness Support Groups

Immigrants Rising's Wellness Support Groups help undocumented people stay grounded and connected to the community. These groups are right for you if:

- You are undocumented.
- You are 18 or older.
- You reside anywhere in the U.S.
- You feel comfortable conversing in English.
- You have a tool to join virtual meetings (phone, laptop, etc.).
- You meet the additional requirements depending on the intended population (for example, UndocuLatinx, undocuAPI, Black & Undocumented, etc.).



# UNDOCU-TALKS

Undocu Scholars Mental Health  
Support Group

In Collaboration with Rio Hondo College  
Student Health & Psychological Services

Martin Covarrubias M.S. (he/they) &  
Glenn Heap M.S., L.M.F.T. (he/him/él)



**Student Health &  
Psychological Services**

# UNDOCU SCHOLARS PROGRAM MISSION

Undocu Scholars is an empowering educational support program dedicated to uplifting undocumented students at Rio Hondo College. Their mission is to guide students through their educational journey and help students unlock every opportunity available - as an undocumented student. Together the Undocu Scholars Program creates an inclusive, supportive, and break free from systematic limitations on the Rio Hondo College campus.

# SERVICES PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS



## EXPLORE OUR DREAMERS' RESOURCE CENTER

**Our mission is to educate and empower undocumented students with the resources available!**

- CARECEN Legal Services
- Undocu Scholars Program
- Study & Lounge Space
- Book & Meal Vouchers
- Field Trips
- Counseling
- FAFSA/CADAA Tips
- and more!



**HABLAMOS ESPAÑOL**

**SWING BY**



**LR 105**



**562-463-7063**



**dreamers@rioondo.edu**



**Student Health & Psychological Services**

- Navigating Rio Hondo College
- Individual Counselor
- Educational Plans, registering for courses, Academic Alerts, and Interventions with students
- CADAA Assistance
- Community Events
- Dreamers Resource Center
- Free Snacks & Educational Materials
- Book & Meal Vouchers
- Resource Referrals
- CARECEN Legal Services on Wednesdays
- Undocu Scholars Mentorship program
- Undocu Talks - Mental Health Support Group in collaboration with Rio Hondo College Student Health and Psychological Services



**California  
Community  
Colleges**

# SUPPORT GROUP AGREEMENT



Student Health &  
Psychological Services

## Support Group Agreement

Protect privacy and confidentiality for our hybrid group (in person & Zoom)

- Maintain the confidentiality of other participants. It takes a lot of mutual trust for folks to share. There is no greater compliment than to be trusted.

Zoomers:

- Do not record, screenshot, or share on social media any portion of this meeting.
- We encourage Zoomers to have their camera on to help us all feel more connected.
- Move to a location where you have privacy or wear head/earphones to protect the group's privacy. Please limit ambient noise and mute your microphone when you're not speaking

This is our group

- A place to create safety for each other where we can be vulnerable when ready
- Honesty is appreciated and respected
- Use "I" statements
- Patience and kindness are valued here. This kind of meeting space is new for many.

Share and listen generously

- Feel free to step up and step back as comfortable.

If and when you feel comfortable, share as much as you like. It is not a good vibes only space.

It is not required to share anything that you don't want to. It is not required to share anything at all.

- If you're on Zoom, feel free to unmute to talk or to type in the chat.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Student Health &  
Psychological Services

# Creating a supportive environment for undocumented community college students is crucial. Here are some important things to remember:

## 1. Confidentiality and Trust

- Emphasize the importance of confidentiality. Members should feel safe sharing their experiences without fear of exposure.

## 2. Cultural Sensitivity

- Be aware of diverse backgrounds and experiences. Respect cultural differences and ensure that discussions are inclusive.

## 3. Empowerment

- Focus on empowerment through education and resources. Highlight success stories and strategies for overcoming challenges.

## 4. Resource Sharing

- Provide information on legal resources, financial aid options, scholarships for undocumented students, and community support services.

## 5. Mental Health Awareness

- Acknowledge the emotional toll of undocumented status. Encourage discussions around mental health and coping strategies.

## 6. Safe Space Creation

- Foster a non-judgmental environment where members can express their feelings and concerns freely.

## 7. Networking Opportunities

- Encourage members to connect with each other, creating a supportive network for sharing experiences and resources.

## 8. Advocacy

- Discuss the importance of advocacy at local, state, and national levels. Empower members to engage in advocacy efforts.

## 9. Access to Information

- Provide clear, accessible information about immigration laws, rights, and changes in policies affecting undocumented students.

## 10. Inclusive Activities

- Organize activities that promote community bonding and resilience, such as workshops, guest speakers, or cultural events.

## 11. Regular Feedback

- Seek regular feedback from participants to ensure the group meets their needs and adjusts accordingly.

## 12. Celebrate Achievements

- Acknowledge and celebrate individual and collective accomplishments to build a sense of pride and motivation.



Student Health &  
Psychological Services

## STUDENTS WANT TO DISCUSS...

- Their own story: example: age of arrival is different from student to student, from arriving as a 2-month-old to as recent as a couple of years ago. Students come from many other countries for different reasons
- When they found out they were undocumented OR the implications of understanding what it meant, especially regarding barriers and perceived barriers
- Mixed-status families and how that plays out for our students
- Intersectionality: Many of our Undocu Scholars identify as queer, some have experienced the foster care system, and or have been system impacted in different ways, etc.
- The current political environment and what some politicians say about immigrants

Benefits of attending group:

Not alone

Inspired by each other's stories

Connection to each other and college programs and staff



Student Health &  
Psychological Services



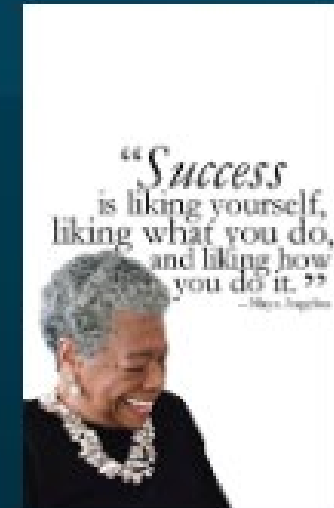
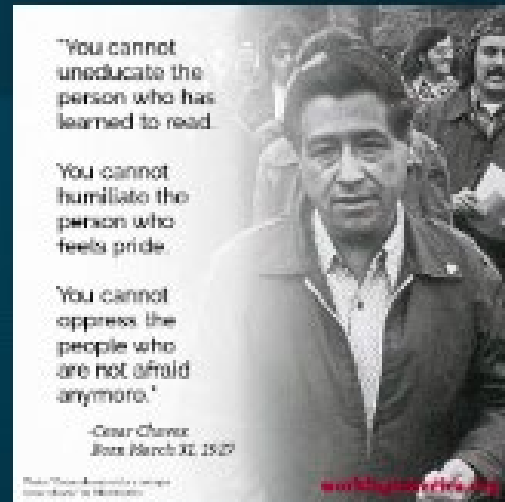
# MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION: WHAT CO-FACILITATORS BRING TO THE GROUP

- Inspirational Quotes (see next slide)
- Management and coping skills for Depression, Anxiety (including Social Anxiety)
- Discussion of Healthy Relationships, be it with family, friends, coworkers, college staff and faculty, and romantic relationships
- Boundary Setting and Respecting
- Questions so members of the group can get to know each other better, from the game: "Tell Me More" and other resources

## EXAMPLES:

- What's something you often wish people knew or understood about you?
- What's something you think you'll get better and better at for the rest of your life?

# Quotes to ponder and discuss: Does anything resonate with you or bother you about these thoughts?



Student Health &  
Psychological Services

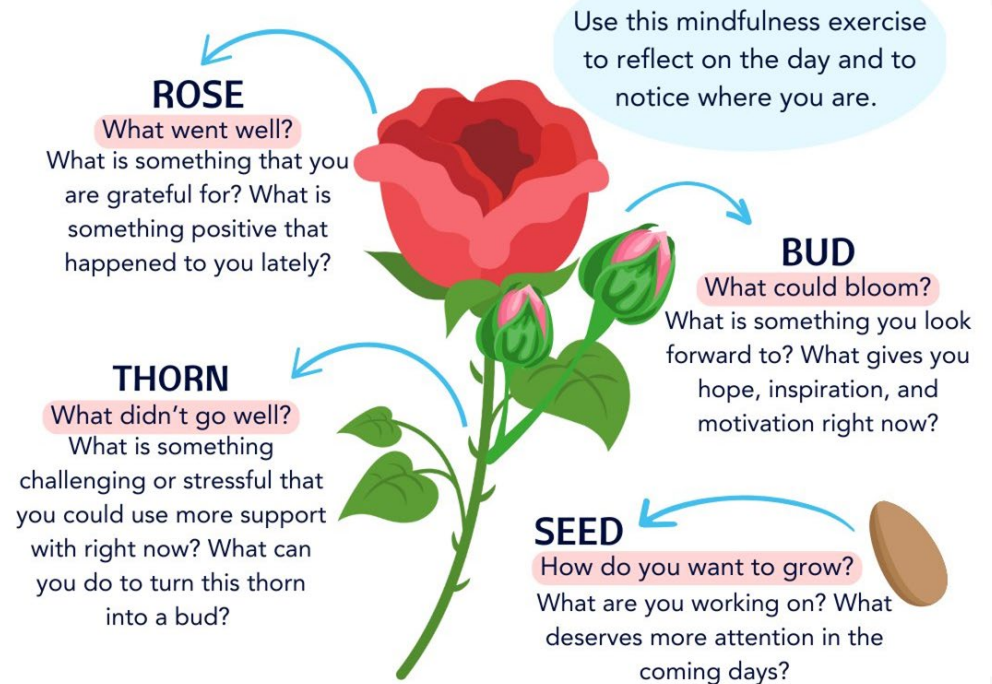


California  
Community  
Colleges

# ACTIVITY WE CONDUCT WITH PARTICIPANTS

- Roses, Buds & Thorns
- We give any student who chooses to, the opportunity to share each session.
- This is their favorite way, and almost everyone chooses to share

## ROSE, BUD & THORN CHECK-IN



### GARDNER

Who has helped you?  
Who are the people in your life that have provided you support today? How can you show them appreciation and gratitude?

**ROSE**  
Smarter Mental Health

# STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

“Undocu Talks helps me create awareness with public policies around the state of California and the overall Undocumented Community. I can strengthen my sense of community with students, staff, and allies. Undocu Talks is a safe space for me to be expressive”

- *Jose (Auto Motive Major)*

“It's nice to know that I am not ignored, but instead I'm appreciated. Our Undocu Scholars program makes me feel welcomed. I would not have known about resources in higher education”

- *Cristian (Nursing Major)*

"Undocu Talks has been my foundation throughout my college experience from starting as a community college student to becoming a university student. As my last semester approaches, I reflect on how this support group has supported my academic journey. Through our roses and thorns we have shared within the group, I have learned to celebrate both the ups and downs we face in life and to never give up on your dreams. Undocu Talks isn't just my support group, it is my community"

- *Angelica (RHC Grad 2022)*

# Navigating Health Coverage: Options for Community College Students



**COVERED  
CALIFORNIA**

**Karol Sandoval**

Statewide Field Manager  
Outreach and Sales Division

FOLLOW US



YouTube





# Covered California & Medi-Cal Overview



- California state's health insurance marketplace
- Allows shopping and enrollment in health insurance plans
- Offers plan options from private insurers like Anthem, Blue Shield, Kaiser, Health Net, and many more.
- Enables easy comparison of plans
- Only place for Californians to get financial assistance
- Provides federal tax credits and subsidies to lower costs
- Purpose is to make health insurance accessible and affordable
- [www.CoveredCA.com](http://www.CoveredCA.com)



- California's Medicaid program
- Provides free or low-cost health coverage
- For low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly, and disabled
- Funded by state and federal government
- Ensures vulnerable populations have access to necessary medical care
- <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medicaid/pages/applyformedi-cal.aspx>



# Health Benefits Coverage\*

Medi-Cal and Covered California both provide access to a range of health benefits, covering essential health needs.



- Ambulatory patient services (outpatient care)
- Emergency services
- Hospitalization
- Pregnancy, maternity, and newborn care
- Mental health and substance use disorder services
- Prescription drugs
- Rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices
- Laboratory services
- Preventive and wellness services and chronic disease management
- Pediatric services, including oral and vision care



- Doctor visits
- Hospital stays
- Preventive care
- Nursing home care
- Dental care (limited for adults)
- Vision care
- Mental health services
- Substance use disorder services
- Some prescription drugs

\* Specific coverage details can vary based on the plan and program.

# Single Streamline Application Process



Covered California and Medi-Cal use **the same application**. That means that once you apply, you'll find out which program you qualify for. Some households qualify for both.



1. **Check Open Enrollment:** Application is typically during the open enrollment period, though special enrollment periods are available for qualifying life events.
2. **Gather Information:** Have information ready about your household, income, and any current health insurance.
3. **Apply:** Complete the application online via the Covered California website, over the phone, or with the help of a certified enroller.
4. **Compare Plans:** Review available plans, considering factors like premiums, benefits, and provider networks.
5. **Select a Plan:** Choose the plan that best fits your needs and budget.
6. **Enroll and Pay Premium:** Enroll in your chosen plan and pay your first premium to start coverage.



1. **Determine Eligibility:** Check if you meet the income and residency requirements for Medi-Cal.
2. **Gather Information:** Prepare necessary documents such as proof of income, residency, and identity.
3. **Apply:** Submit your application online through the Covered California website, by mail, in person at a local county social services office, or by phone.
4. **Review:** Your application will be reviewed, and you may be asked to provide additional information.
5. **Receive Notification:** You'll receive a notice of action letter telling you if you qualify for Medi-Cal and the benefits you're eligible for.
6. **Choose a Plan:** If eligible, select a Medi-Cal health plan and a primary care provider.

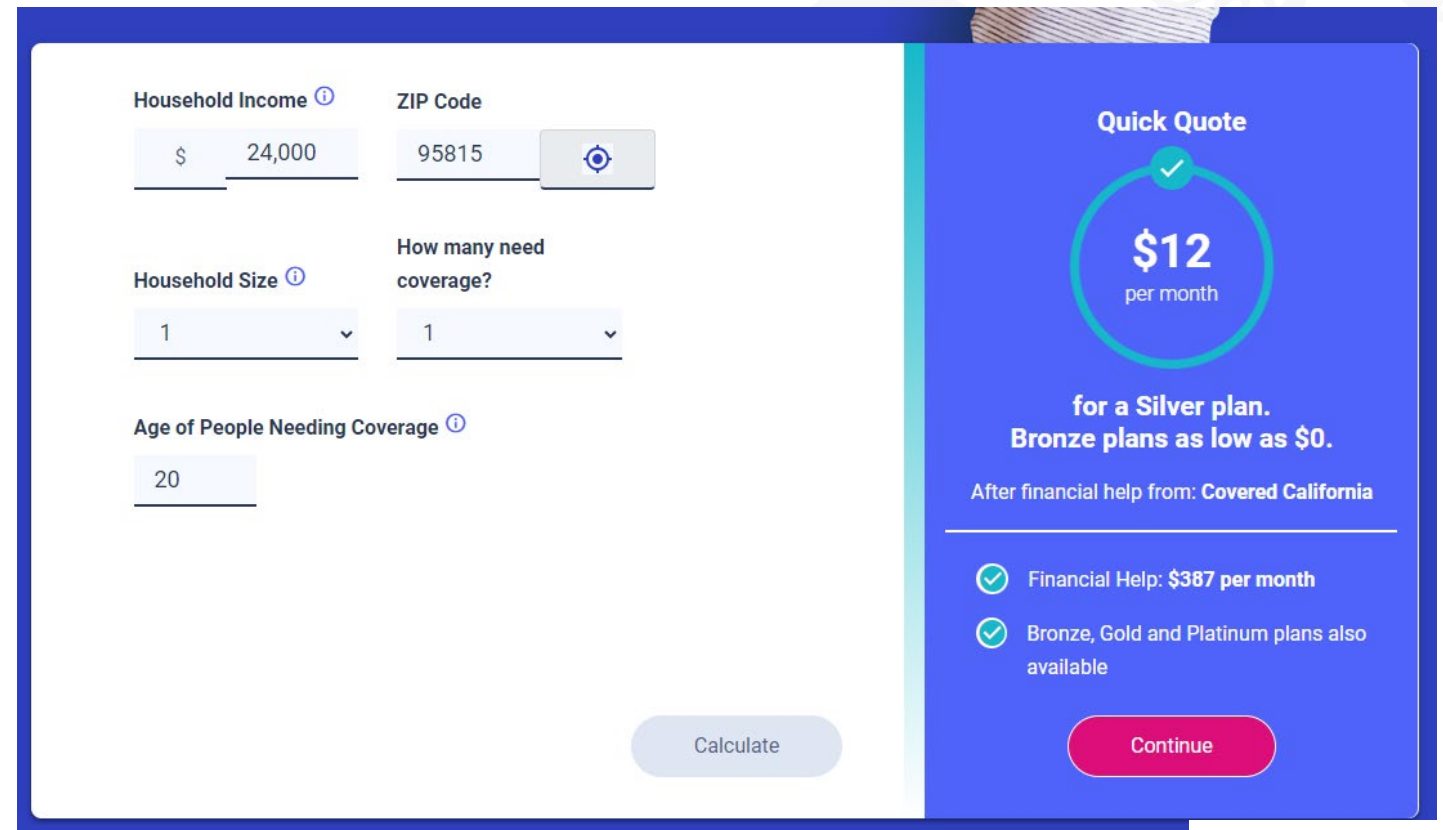
# Quick Quote Calculator

Estimates health insurance costs  
on Covered California plans.

- Single 20 y/o Individual
- \$24,000 Annual Income
- Living in 95815



- Financial Help \$387 per month
- \$12 per month for a Silver plan
- \$0 for a Bronze plan



The screenshot shows the 'Quick Quote' calculator interface. On the left, there are input fields for 'Household Income' (set to \$24,000), 'ZIP Code' (95815), 'Household Size' (1), 'How many need coverage?' (1), and 'Age of People Needing Coverage' (20). A 'Calculate' button is at the bottom right of the input section. On the right, a blue sidebar displays the results: 'Quick Quote' with a checkmark icon, '\$12 per month' in a large circle, 'for a Silver plan. Bronze plans as low as \$0.', and 'After financial help from: Covered California'. Below this, two green checkmarks indicate 'Financial Help: \$387 per month' and 'Bronze, Gold and Platinum plans also available'. A 'Continue' button is at the bottom of the sidebar.

Field	Value
Household Income	\$24,000
ZIP Code	95815
Household Size	1
How many need coverage?	1
Age of People Needing Coverage	20

**Quick Quote**

✓

**\$12**  
per month

**for a Silver plan.**  
Bronze plans as low as \$0.

After financial help from: **Covered California**

- ✓ Financial Help: **\$387 per month**
- ✓ Bronze, Gold and Platinum plans also available

**Calculate** **Continue**

<https://www.coveredca.com/>

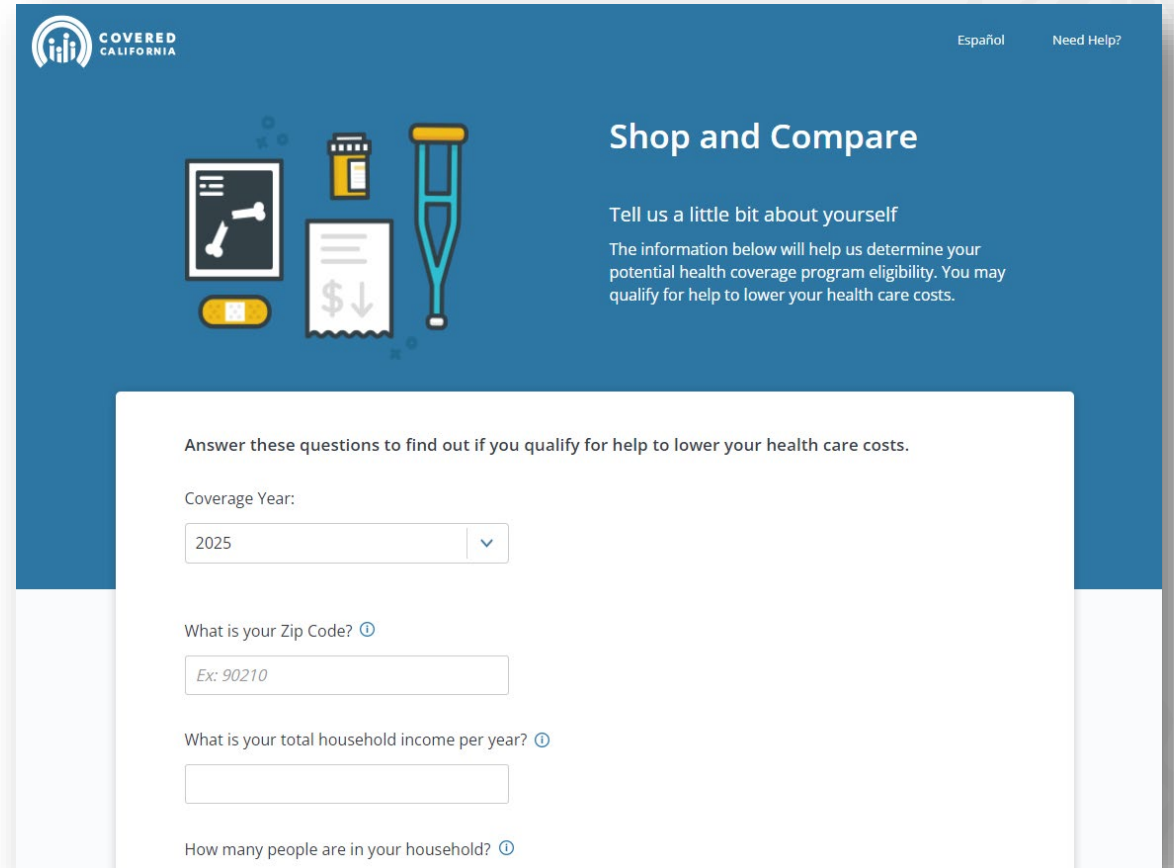
# Shop & Compare Tool online

Estimate potential health insurance costs and financial assistance.

DOCTOR SEARCH

PLAN RATES

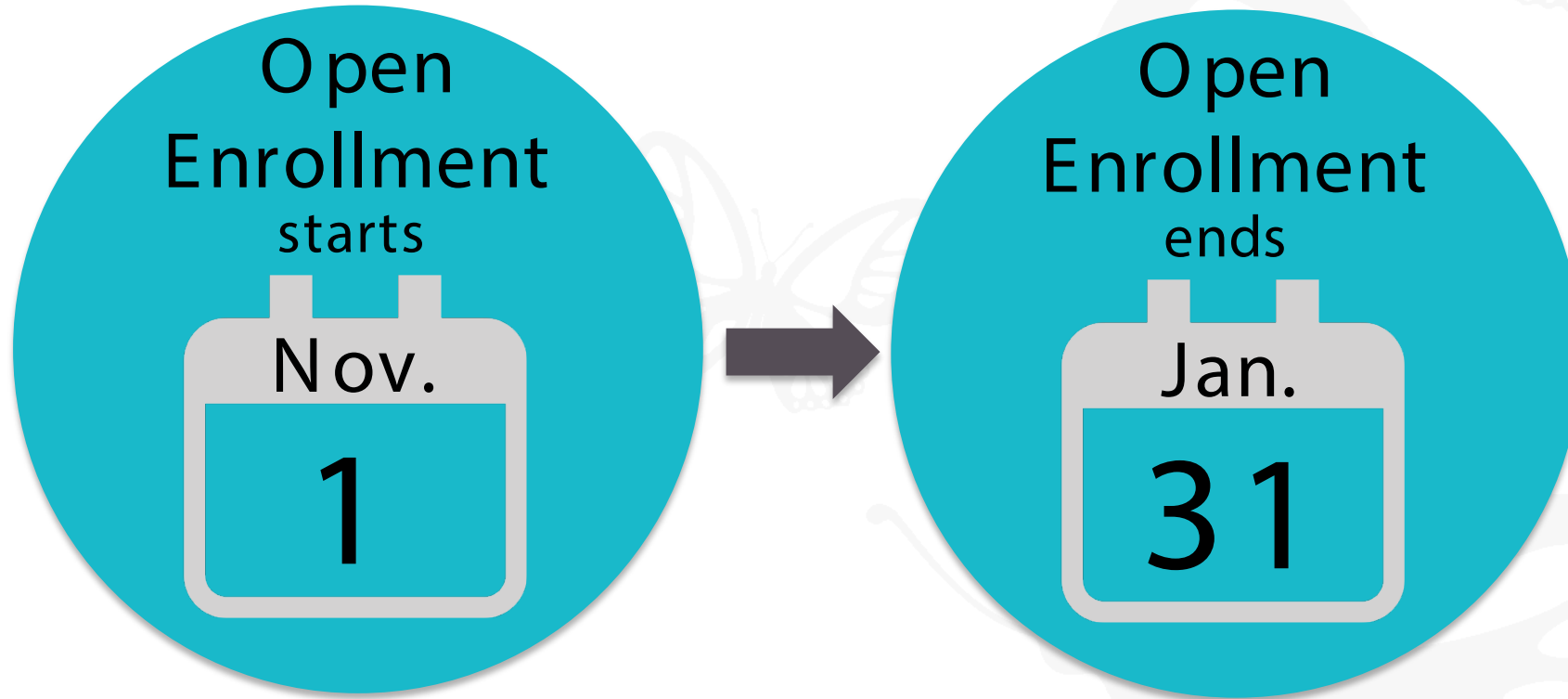
FINANCIAL  
ASSISTANCE  
AMOUNTS



The screenshot shows the 'Shop and Compare' tool interface. At the top, there's a header with the 'COVERED CALIFORNIA' logo and links for 'Español' and 'Need Help?'. Below the header, there's a section titled 'Shop and Compare' with a subtitle 'Tell us a little bit about yourself'. The text explains that the information provided will help determine eligibility for health coverage programs and potential financial assistance. A form is displayed with the following questions and input fields:

- Coverage Year:** A dropdown menu showing '2025'.
- What is your Zip Code?** A text input field with a hint 'Ex: 90210'.
- What is your total household income per year?** A text input field.
- How many people are in your household?** A text input field.


# 2025 Plan Year, Open Enrollment Dates



# Get Help Now!

## Get Help Now


Get free and confidential help right away.



### Find an Enroller

Licensed Insurance Agents and Certified Enrollers are ready to help.

Find an Enroller




### Storefronts

Meet with licensed insurance agents and certified enrollers. Appointments and walk-ins available.

Find a Storefront


For new enrollees



### Help on Demand

Have a certified enroller call you. Most calls are returned in under 15 minutes.

Get a Call Back



### Events

Find events near you where you can sign up or get help.

Find Events Near You

It's easy. Apply on our website or get free, confidential help from a certified enroller. Covered California and Medi-Cal use the same application. This means that once you apply, you'll find out which program you qualify for. Some households qualify for both.

<https://www.coveredca.com/support/contact-us/>



# California Penalty & Exemptions

Effective **January 1, 2020**, California residents must either:

- Have qualifying health insurance coverage, *or*
- Pay a penalty when filing a state tax return, *or*
- Get an exemption from the requirement to have coverage.

The penalty for not having coverage the entire 2023 year will be at least **\$900 per adult** and **\$450 per dependent child under 18** in the household when you file your 2023 state income tax return in 2024.

A family of four that goes uninsured for the whole year would face a penalty of at least \$2,700.

The infographic is divided into two main sections by a vertical line. The left section is white and titled 'Get COVERED' in blue and black text. It features a blue hand icon holding a coin and a dark grey box containing '\$0' with 'per year' written below it. The right section is dark grey and titled 'Pay the PENALTY' in white text. It features a blue hand icon holding a coin and a light blue box containing '\$900' with 'at least' above it and 'per year' below it. A circular icon with the word 'OR' is placed between the two sections. A teal banner at the top contains the text: 'It may actually cost you *less* to get covered than to pay the tax penalty. For example, a 30 year-old individual living in Los Angeles, making \$18,000/year would pay more to NOT have health coverage.'

It may actually cost you *less* to get covered than to pay the tax penalty.  
For example, a 30 year-old individual living in Los Angeles, making \$18,000/year would pay more to NOT have health coverage.

Get **COVERED** **OR** Pay the **PENALTY**

**\$0**  
per year

at least **\$900**  
per year

# College Students Applying for Healthcare with Covered California or Medi-Cal

## Understand Your Options:

- Learn the basics of Covered California and Medi-Cal.

## Check Eligibility:

- See if you qualify for financial help or Medi-Cal.

## Important Dates:

- Remember the Open Enrollment period and Special Enrollment opportunities.

## Gather Documents:

- Have your ID, proof of income, and residency ready.

## Estimate Income:

- Know your expected yearly income.

## Assess Healthcare Needs:

- Think about your medical needs to choose the right plan.

## Explore Plans:

- Use the Shop and Compare Tool online to find the best plan for you.

## Apply:

- Submit your application online, by phone, or in person.

## Choose and Enroll in a Plan:

- Pick a plan that fits and pay your first premium.

# Thank you!

**Undocumented  
Student Action Week**

Education and Career UndocuDreams Made Possible



California Community Colleges

