

Memos show slow start for health care plans

November 1 2013, by William M. Welch

The federal government's new health care program got off to such a slow start that only six people successfully enrolled on its website the first day and only a few hundred had done so by the second day, documents released by Congress late Thursday show.

The [documents](#), released by the Republican-controlled House Oversight Committee, state that just 248 people had succeeded in enrolling on the HealthCare.Gov site by the end of the second day, Oct. 2.

The documents are notes prepared for the "war room" set up by the federal Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight to manage the problematic rollout of the [website](#) and enrollment for the new plans under the Affordable Care Act, often called Obamacare.

The committee is investigating the problems.

Obama administration officials have repeatedly declined to provide a public number or estimate for enrollment in health coverage under the new program. The memos document the problems that the administration was facing as the website for consumers to shop for plans and sign up was unable to process many applications because of overloaded capacity and other system issues.

The federal website, for residents of 36 states that do not have their own health sign-up site, launched Oct. 1. By the morning of Oct. 2, the memo declares "6 enrollments have occurred so far with 5 different issuers."

It said that as of that morning, direct enrollments, in which an applicant signed up directly on the policy issuer's website, "is not working for any issuers."

The release comes just a day after Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius told Congress she could not give enrollment figures.

"We do not have any reliable data around enrollment, which is why we haven't given it to date," Sebelius said.

HHS spokeswoman Joanne Peters told ABC News following release of the memos that the enrollment figures presented in the documents are unofficial figures. The agency has said it intends to release its first official report on enrollment by mid-November.

"We will release [enrollment](#) statistics on a monthly basis after coordinating information from different sources such as paper, online, and call centers, verifying with insurers and collecting data from states," she said.

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