

Obamacare enrollment reaches 4 million

February 26 2014, by Karen Pallarito, Healthday Reporter



Advocates report surge in outreach efforts to uninsured Americans.

(HealthDay)—Nearly 4 million Americans have signed up for health insurance through the Affordable Care Act's federal and state marketplaces since October, the Obama administration announced Tuesday.

With almost five weeks remaining in the current [enrollment](#) period, roughly 700,000 people selected a [health plan](#) in February alone, according to published reports.

In a blog posting, Marilyn Tavenner, administrator of the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, cited "strong demand nationwide" for affordable health coverage.

"Our outreach efforts are in full force, with community partners and local officials participating in hundreds of events each week," she said, "and enrollment assistors are helping more and more people enroll in coverage."

The health insurance marketplaces, or exchanges, serve as the gateway for coverage through private health plans established under the

Affordable Care Act, or "Obamacare."

The administration's last official enrollment report, released earlier this month, indicated that 3.3 million people had selected a marketplace health plan from Oct. 1 through early February.

Advocacy groups are reporting a whirlwind of activity this month as they try to enroll as many uninsured Americans as possible before open enrollment ends on March 31.

In Miami, the national enrollment campaign Get Covered America has partnered with local government and civic organizations, colleges, universities and religious organizations on various outreach activities, particularly targeting the metropolitan area's vast Latino community.

"We're continuing our efforts from now until the end of the enrollment period, and will continue our multi-pronged approach," Milton Vazquez, Get Covered America's Miami field organizer, said during a Tuesday press briefing on Latino enrollment sponsored by the Center for American Progress Action Fund.

Even at 4 million, the number of people who have signed up for one of the new marketplace health plans falls short of expectations. The U.S. Congressional Budget Office had projected 6 million sign-ups in 2014.

But the bungled launch of the federal marketplace website, HealthCare.gov, and technical difficulties experienced by some state exchanges made enrolling difficult, if not impossible, in the early days and weeks of enrollment. Having worked out the bugs and expanded computer system capacity, federal and state officials are reporting what they call an encouraging uptick in enrollment.

Obama administration officials and health advocates anticipate

additional enrollment growth in the coming weeks as many uninsured people, particularly young adults, wait until the last minute to sign up for a health plan.

The administration hasn't reported the number of marketplace enrollees who were previously uninsured. And it hasn't said how many have paid their first month's premium—a prerequisite for [health insurance](#) coverage.

The administration said it would release a full enrollment report for February in mid-March.

More information: Visit HealthCare.gov [to learn about the new health plan options](#).

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