

Almost 1 million signed up for Obamacare after open enrollment

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Many had switched jobs, lost coverage under parents' plans, got married or had a baby, feds report.

(HealthDay)—Close to 1 million Americans signed up for coverage under the Affordable Care Act, also called Obamacare, after the open enrollment period ended earlier this year, U.S. health officials reported.

The new customers signed up with the federal health insurance exchange after they became eligible due to changes in their circumstances, such as losing work-provided coverage or having a baby, according to a Thursday statement from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

With these new sign-ups, it's likely that the federal government will meet its target of 9 million to 10 million people who have paid for coverage through insurance exchanges by the end of the year.

"So far this year, nearly 950,000 people have gained the peace of mind that comes with access to coverage by taking advantage of a special enrollment period, providing us with further evidence that the Health Insurance Marketplace is working for America's families," Kevin Counihan, CEO of HealthCare.gov, the federally run health insurance exchange, said in the statement.

"We want people to know that if they lose a job, get married, have a baby, or experience other life changes, we're here to help them find coverage they can afford," Counihan added.

The new enrollees include people who chose plans between Feb. 23, 2015 and June 30, 2015 in the 37 states that rely on the federal exchange. It does not necessarily mean they have paid premiums, according to the CMS.

CMS said nearly 85 percent of those people signed up for one of three reasons: half had lost their health insurance or access to minimal benefits required by law; 20 percent learned they were ineligible for Medicaid; and 15 percent found out they would have to pay a penalty for not having [health insurance](#).

The latest sign-ups included a large number—2.5 million—of people aged 34 and younger, which suggests they had switched jobs, were no longer covered under their parents' plans or went through major life changes such as marriage or becoming a parent, CMS said.

However, Obamacare—the centerpiece domestic legislation of President Barack Obama's presidency—remains controversial. Republicans have consistently vowed to repeal the law.

During open enrollment this year, about 8.8 million people chose a plan or were re-enrolled through HealthCare.gov. As of March 31, 7.5 million

people had coverage and paid premiums, and 2.9 million had obtained coverage and paid premiums through state-run exchanges, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

More information: Visit the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) for more on the Affordable Care Act.

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