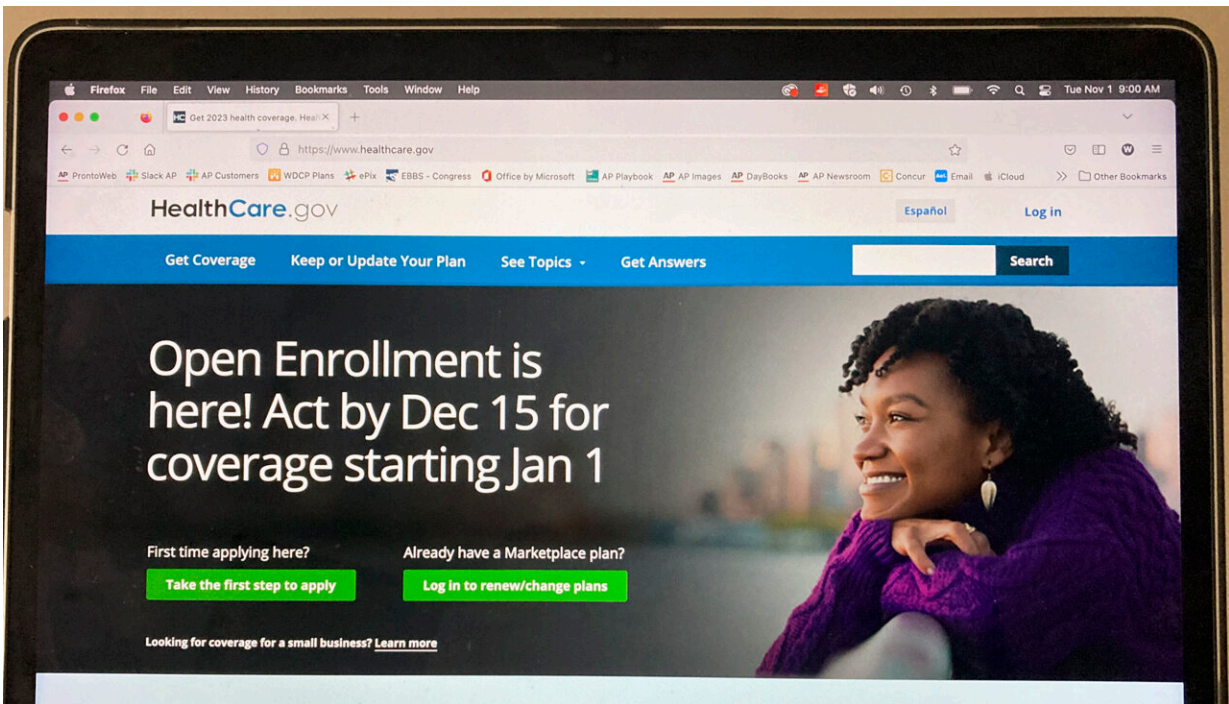


Boost in people seeking HealthCare.gov coverage, HHS says

November 22 2022, by Amanda Seitz



The healthcare.gov website is seen on Nov. 1, 2022 in Washington. The Biden administration says it's seeing a big uptick in the number of new customers buying private health insurance for 2023 from the Affordable Care Act's marketplace. Credit: AP Photo, File

The Biden administration announced Tuesday that it's seeing a big uptick in the number of new customers buying private health insurance for 2023 from the Affordable Care Act's marketplace.

Nearly 3.4 million people have signed up for coverage—an increase of 17% compared to the same time last year. The boost in enrollment comes as the number of uninsured Americans this year reached a historic low of 8%.

"When you have a good product, people will buy it," Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra told The Associated Press.

More than 665,000 new people have bought plans on the marketplace since open enrollment started on Nov. 1.

HHS didn't provide any demographic details about the new enrollees, but Becerra said he hopes the agency is reaching people in marginalized communities. Already this year, [the marketplace saw huge gains in the number of Black, Latino and Native Americans who sought coverage.](#)

Between 2020 and 2022, the number of Latino enrollees jumped from 1.7 million to 2.6 million while 1.3 million Black people enrolled last year, up from 900,000 the year before. The number of American Indian enrollees increased from 52,000 to 68,000.

"There's a very strong chance we're continuing to get communities that had been left behind to sign up," Becerra said.



Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra speaks during a news conference at the HHS Humphrey Building, Oct. 18, 2022, in Washington. The Biden administration says it's seeing a big uptick in the number of new customers buying private health insurance for 2023 from the Affordable Care Act's marketplace. Credit: AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, File

The boost in enrollment is largely driven by generous subsidies—[extended through 2025 in the Democrats' \\$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief law](#)—that keep monthly premiums payments at \$0 or just a few dollars monthly for most people who sign up.

People can sign up for coverage on HealthCare.gov or through their state's marketplace by Dec. 15 to get coverage that starts on Jan. 1.

Experts will be watching to see if the strong start to the ACA's open enrollment continues for the next few weeks.

"This demonstrates very solid demand for health insurance," said Massey Whorley, a principal at health consulting firm Avalere. "Only time will tell if this is truly, outsized significant growth, or if it is people acting earlier in the open enrollment window."

The record-low insurance rate in the U.S. could also be disrupted next year, when the government is expected to declare an end to the COVID-19 pandemic and boot millions of Medicaid recipients off the coverage. That could drive more people to the federal marketplace in 2023, Whorley added.

"We're going to be looking at a period of significant flux," Whorley said. "All of this points to more and more people coming into the exchange."

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