

Visit Obamacare website off-peak: US health chief

30 November 2013

Individuals seeking to sign up for health coverage on the US government's troubled website were urged to visit the crisis-hit portal during off-peak hours on Friday.

In comments which reflect the ongoing problems with the [site](#), which made a calamitous debut last month, US Secretary of Health Kathleen Sebelius said individuals hoping to sign up for health insurance should avoid visiting the site at peak times.

"Shop HealthCare.gov during off-peak hours (mornings/nights/weekends)," Sebelius wrote in a series of guidelines for navigating the site published by The Huffington Post.

The rollout of the website, which in theory should allow every American without health insurance to register for coverage, has been plagued by technical problems since its launch.

President Barack Obama's administration had earlier vowed to improve the site's technical failings by November 30, hoping to enable the site to be capable of accommodating 50,000 users at a time.

However, in a sign the administration still lacks confidence in the website, the White House is working to avoid a massive influx of visitors that might crash the site again, The New York Times reported Wednesday.

The paper cited anonymous administration officials as saying they feared the number of people trying to sign up for coverage simultaneously could be five times greater than the 50,000 target figure.

The report said officials were canceling a marketing push and urging allies not to drive too much traffic to the site.

Only some 27,000 people managed to sign up for

[health insurance](#) via healthcare.gov in October, according to official figures.

Health care reform was the centerpiece of Obama's election campaign in 2008 and was passed in 2010 before being confirmed in 2012 by the Supreme Court.

Obama's popularity has nosedived to an all-time low since implementation of the Affordable Care Act, dubbed "Obamacare," got underway.

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