

Slowly but Surely, Healthcare.gov is Getting Better

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Link: <http://kcpw.org/blog/local-news/2013-12-04/slowly-surely-healthcare-gov-getting-better/>



The new look of the healthcare.gov homepage. (Source: healthcare.gov)

(KCPW News) After the ineffective rollout of healthcare.gov in October, the Obama Administration set a self-imposed deadline of November 30 to work out all the kinks to their online health insurance exchange.

Just a few days after that deadline has passed, the

Associated Press is reporting that the functionality of the healthcare.gov website has improved for Utah residents attempting to enroll.

The Association for Utah Community Health has been active in getting Utahns to enroll in healthcare with the new exchange. Executive Director Alan Pruhs says there's still room for improvement, but he reports that the website is running much more smoothly.

"Sometimes it's just running slow on occasion," Pruhs says. "We've been going back and forth between using different browsers at times. Sometimes it's reported to us that Google Chrome is working better than Internet Explorer. Sometimes it could just be a hitch in the system, could be bandwidth. We don't really know."

Pruhs says that about three out of every four people his organization helps to enroll actually make it through the application process without issues. Even so, Pruhs wants people to know that the website is open for business.

“If we’re not getting four out of every four, and we’re not getting through it in a timely manner, there’s still improvements (to be made). But I think it’s good for folks to see that things have improved and things are working,” Pruhs says.

Alliance Community Services, a Utah-based organization that specializes in Hispanic and Latino outreach, has also helped Utahns enroll in the new insurance exchange. But Affordable Care Act navigator Angela Castaño says she tried to enroll someone on healthcare.gov earlier in the day Tuesday, but she wasn’t able to do so. Despite inconsistencies with the website, Castaño maintains that people shouldn’t give up on it.

“I think we need to try and try and try,” Castaño says, “because if you discourage people to go to the website, I think that’s negative. We have to try and convince people that it’s a good thing and try to do our best.”

Unlike some states that have set up their own online exchanges, Utah depends on the federally-run exchange. Thirty-five other states also depend on the federal exchange.