

Utahns still looking for help navigating federal health insurance marketplace

By [Wendy Leonard](#), Deseret News

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Alexis Anderson gets information at a health care open house for the Affordable Care Act hosted at the Sorenson Unity Center in Salt Lake City Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2013.

Jeffrey D. Allred, Deseret News

SALT LAKE CITY — Despite federal setbacks, many Utahns are still actively seeking help with enrolling for health care benefits under the Affordable Care Act.

"I don't think it is a secret that [healthcare.gov](#) has had a few glitches over the past few weeks," said Randall Serr, director of [Take Care Utah](#), a consumer health assistance program hosted by the Utah Health Policy Project in collaboration with other nonprofits, United Way of Salt Lake and 2-1-1.

Serr said the federal government, which operates the health insurance marketplace in Utah and 35 other states, has developed some online tools, including a way for consumers to compare available plans and their prices without creating an account, as well as have access to the [Kaiser Family Foundation tax subsidy calculator](#).

"It is getting better every day, but it's definitely not as user-friendly as we think it should be," Serr told members of the Utah Health System Reform Task Force on Thursday.

The nonprofits, which have received federal grants to train health care benefit navigators and run call centers for the public, are slowly achieving licensure and certification, which has been complicated and challenging, Serr said.

But calls are coming in.

Serr said the majority of callers are looking for general information, including inquiries about why the federal website is not working or how to get help signing up. People, he said, are most surprised to learn that they qualify for tax subsidies to help them pay the cost of their insurance premiums.

Take Care Utah has offered dozens of presentations across the state and is still receiving requests from local libraries and community groups to do so. More information and access to navigators can be found online at www.takecareutah.org.

"We are trying to help people learn how this affects them," Serr said.

It is unknown how many Americans have successfully signed up for health care benefits with the federal marketplace since it opened on Oct. 1, but Serr said some people are able to get through.

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