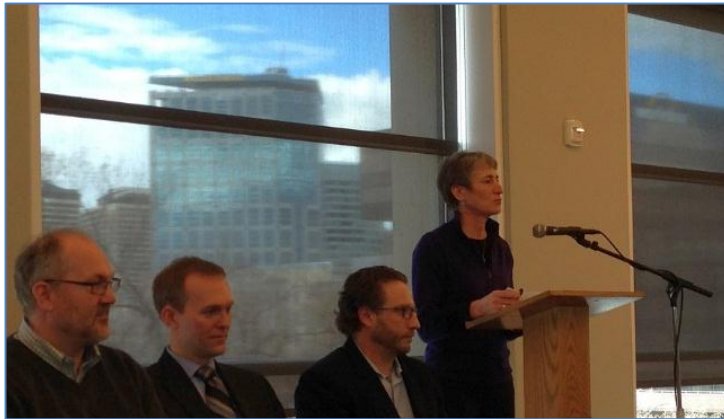


Interior Secretary visits Utah to encourage ACA enrollment

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SALT LAKE CITY — She heads a federal department that has nothing to do with healthcare policy, but Interior Secretary Sally Jewell came across as a forceful advocate for the Affordable Care Act as she spoke at Salt Lake City's downtown public library to encourage enrollment.

Jewell made a speech and then conducted an interview with Fox 13

to talk about why the person in charge of agencies like the National Park Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs was speaking about the federal marketplace for insurance.

Jewell harkened to her days running the outdoor retail giant REI to make the point that health insurance is a necessity not just for physical health, but also for financial well being.

The event comes in advance of the March 31 deadline when uninsured Americans have to sign up for a health plan or pay a penalty on their taxes.

The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that 331,000 Utahns are eligible for the subsidized health insurance marketplace.

As of Feb. 1, 29,419 Utahns signed up for a plan.

The C.O.O. of Arches Health Plan, Utah's healthcare cooperative, Shaun Greene, said their enrollments are well below where they wanted to be at this time, but after problems with the federal website got mostly resolved, the program has been working well, and the federal government has come through with subsidies for Arches customers.