

Temporary solution could bridge the gap for Utahns who have no option for healthcare

Link: <http://www.good4utah.com/story/d/story/temporary-solution-could-bridge-the-gap-for-utahns/27365/LIrlif4vE0KU7wUPuiS7fg>

Video: <http://www.clipsyndicate.com/video/play/5147550>

By Glen Mills

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SALT LAKE CITY, (ABC 4 Utah) – Open enrollment is underway for a program that could bridge the gap for thousands of Utahns who have been left with no option for healthcare.

Primary Care Network or PCN is a state run program that provides basic care for those who have no where else to turn.



It was supposed to dissolve with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, but the need remains, so the Department of Health got approval to keep it running at least through the end of the year.



When the U.S. Supreme court ruled the Medicaid expansion requirement of Obamacare unconstitutional, it created a coverage gap in states that didn't act.

Utah is one of 24 states that have yet to expand, leaving an estimated 57,000 people with no coverage.

"These are Utahns who don't qualify for Medicaid or earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid and they also earn too little to qualify for help on the market place, " RyLee Curtis, with Utah Health Policy Project.

That's where the PCN can help.

"The state negotiated with CMS in order to continue the program while the state determines how it will approach Medicaid expansion," said Kolbi Young, with the Utah Department of Health.

PCN is an option for U.S. citizens or legal residents ages 19 to 64.

Participants must meet certain income requirements, don't qualify for Medicaid, have no other health insurance and have no access to Medicare, veterans benefits or student health insurance.

This is the first open enrollment period since the coverage gap was created with the implementation of the ACA.

The program is limited to budget and only has room for about 7,000 more participants.

"We'll keep enrollment open until it starts filling to capacity, we estimate about 20,000," said Young.

PCN offers access to basic care.

Physician services, prescriptions, dental services, eye exams, emergency room visits, birth control and general preventative services.



It's a temporary solution for some, but not for those with cancer or other serious health issues.

"It falls short of covering those specialty care services, where Utah has this option on the table to close the coverage gap with the governor's Healthy Utah Plan," said Curtis.

To apply follow this link: <http://www.health.utah.gov/pcn/>

Or call: 1-888-222-2542

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