

Survey Shows Utah Uninsured Rate Unchanged by Obamacare



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By [Andrea Smardon](#)

A national poll shows Utah's uninsured rate has not changed since the federal Affordable Care Act required all Americans to have health insurance. This reflects trends across the country, where states that fully embraced the law's coverage expansion are experiencing a significant drop in the number of uninsured residents. But Utah and other states whose leaders still object to Obamacare are seeing much less change.

The [Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index](#) found through telephone surveys that Utahns reported no change in their health insurance status since 2013. That comes as a surprise to Jason Stevenson of Utah Health Policy Project.

"We certainly had people come into our office who have been uninsured for years or decades, or never had insurance who walked out of our office with insurance because of the federal Affordable Care Act," Stevenson says. "We do know we moved the needle, but it wasn't reflected in this survey. We think we're somewhere in the margin of error."

The margin of error for the Gallup survey was as high as 3.5 points for states with smaller population sizes. But Stevenson says there is still a clear takeaway from the poll.

"I think what this survey shows from states like Arkansas and Kentucky, Colorado, New Mexico, Washington state – that if you do expand coverage – if you do make Medicaid or private insurance more accessible to more of your states residents, you will decrease the uninsured rate by a substantial amount," Stevenson says.

Topping the list was Arkansas with a 10 percent drop in its uninsured rate. The poll showed that on average, the states that expanded Medicaid and set up state exchanges decreased their uninsured rates by 4 percent. The rest of the states showed an average 2.2 percent decline. Utah lawmakers have still not decided whether to expand Medicaid and provide more options for the uninsured. Governor Gary Herbert continues to negotiate with the federal government for revised, more flexible terms.