

Many Utahns still not benefiting from Obamacare

KSL-5; KSL.com

By Richard Piatt

November 10, 2015

Link:

http://www.ksl.com/?sid=32303471&nid=148&title=manyutahnsstillnotbenefitingfromobamacare&s_cid=queue13

Video: <http://www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=32303471>



SALT LAKE CITY — Open enrollment for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act begins Nov. 15. And one year since major portions of the law went into effect, it's still not an easy sell to the public, in spite of reports that thousands of Utahns are benefiting from it.

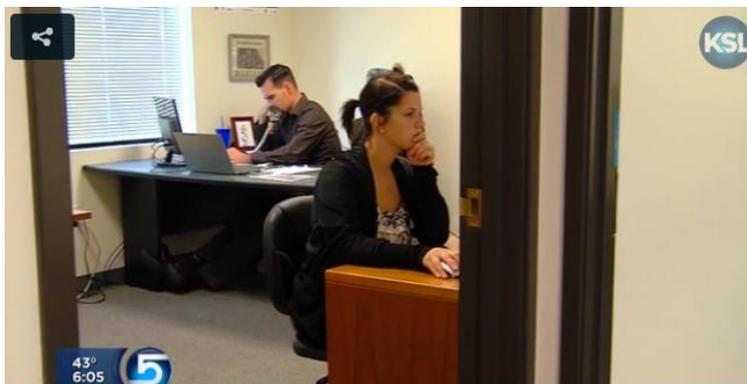
This year, Healthcare.gov has its "bugs" worked out, and in fact has new features to make it easier on consumers to find the right, affordable plan for them. But the Obama administration has revised its forecast on future signups for health insurance in the coming month, just 9 million to 9.9 million. That's far short of the projection of 13 million newly insured under Congressional Budget Office estimates, an independent agency.

In Utah, just over 84,000 people signed up for health insurance before April of this year, a number advocates at Utah Health Policy Project call impressive.

"At the same time of the difficulties with healthcare.gov, I think we have many more Utahns who have access to insurance, to be able to take care of themselves, get that personal responsibility element of being responsible for their health," said Jason Stevenson of the Utah Health Policy Project.

Part of the challenge to getting people signed up is the political noise surrounding the Affordable Care Act.

A Kaiser Family Foundation survey found that 89 percent of uninsured Americans surveyed are not aware that open enrollment starts Saturday.



Plus 66 percent of those responding say they know only "a little" or "nothing at all" about the marketplace, where consumers can search and buy a health insurance plan.

Finally, a little more than half don't know about premium subsidies available to many people, which are allowing millions of people to afford a higher level of health care.



Republicans continue to grumble about the Affordable Care Act's "loose ends," including the new bureaucracy and the fact that some people are paying more than they did in the past.

But the co-chairman of the legislative task force on health system reform acknowledges there

are many parts of the ACA that are working.

"My hope is that it is made to work better, that Congress can work with President Obama to work out some of the bugs. And there are plenty of bugs," Jim Dunningan, co-chairman of the task force, said.

For those who still need health insurance or need to refresh their policy, go to healthcare.gov. Nonpartisan help is available at takeCareUtah.org.