

Utah's Own Health Exchange Has Doubled Enrollment Since 2012

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Link: <http://kuer.org/post/utah-s-own-health-exchange-has-doubled-enrollment-2012>

More small Utah businesses are turning to the state-based health insurance marketplace known as Avenue H to offer healthcare benefits to employees.

As of March this year, 612 Utah businesses were using [Avenue H](#) to provide health coverage to almost 12,900 people. That's more than double the number enrolled three years ago. Patty Conner, director of Avenue H, says Utah's small group exchange is a success story.



"I mean a lot of people didn't think that the marketplaces would get a lot of traction especially on the small business side, and we have proven here in Utah that we can," Conner says. "The numbers have always continued to grow month over month, and we're doing much better than other small business marketplaces across the United States."

Conner says there are 14 states running their own exchanges, and most of them are reporting less than 100 small business groups enrolled. She says Utah had a head start when it rolled out its marketplace back in 2010, and awareness of the program has been key to its success. Jason Stevenson of Utah Health Policy Project says Avenue H provides more options for insurance in the state.

"You know, I think Avenue H has been able to corner a market here in Utah that really needed some assistance, and that is companies that want to offer health insurance to their employees. They want to be competitive in that market and are looking for ways to make it more affordable," Stevenson says.

Avenue H currently provides a choice of 75 different health plans to businesses with 50 employees or less. Employers of this size are not mandated to offer health insurance, but clearly more are making the choice to do so. In a recent market survey conducted by Cicero Group in Utah, about three quarters of small business employers said offering health insurance to their employees is very important.