



Utah ACA enrollment reaches 99 percent of last year's total

In the face of deliberate sabotage efforts and drastic cuts to enrollment assistance programs, Utah enrollment surpasses expectations, demonstrating the high public demand for quality, affordable healthcare

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Today the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released [numbers](#) from the final week of open enrollment showing that more than 195,000 Utahns have selected plans through the healthcare.gov marketplace.

This puts sign-ups for the Utah 2018 "OE5" open enrollment period within 99% of last year's numbers. Many experts and analysts expected enrollment to decline sharply after efforts to sabotage the ACA's individual market, including: cutting off cost sharing reduction payments to insurance companies (causing increased premiums), shortening the enrollment period, slashing navigator funding, and virtually eliminating open enrollment advertising. Instead, we have seen enrollment soar in Utah, which is convincing evidence that the Affordable Care Act is not only still alive, but thriving.

"We are very encouraged by the impressive enrollment numbers released today," said Matt Slonaker, executive director at the Utah Health Policy Project. "We know that Utahns want and need quality, affordable health insurance, and strong individual market sign-up rates continue to demonstrate just how valuable the ACA is to Utah families."

"Despite numerous challenges, including funding cuts of more than 60%, our navigators doubled down and worked diligently to enroll as many Utahns as possible," said Randall Serr,

Take Care Utah Director. "We can only wonder how many more families we could have helped had the enrollment period been longer, or our budget remained intact."

Please review the following bullet points and [this linked PDF](#) for more detailed background information about open enrollment, Take Care Utah, and changes to Utah's 2018 marketplace.

- In September Take Care Utah (TCU) learned that its federal navigator grant would be reduced from \$740,090 to \$289,584—a cut of 61%. This cut forced TCU to eliminate sub-grants, reduce staff, and curtail operations during the next Open Enrollment.
 - Nationally, the federal funding for in-person assistance was reduced by 41% from \$62.8 million to \$36.8 million, and advertising was cut 90%.
- Utah's Open Enrollment period lasted from November 1 to December 15, 2017—a span of 45 days and half as long as in recent years.
- Take Care Utah (TCU) is nationally-recognized network of nonprofit organizations focused on helping people with health insurance. It consists of about 75 enrollment specialists; including navigators, certified applications counselors, and brokers.

It is worth noting that for many Utah customers it was more affordable to go "off market" this year and purchase plans directly from insurers rather than through the healthcare.gov marketplace if they did not qualify for subsidies. Consequently, total individual marketplace enrollment numbers may end up being even higher than the CMS numbers.

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