

# Utah's ACA Open Enrollment Numbers Way Up Over Last Year

Link: <http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2015-02-20/health-issues/utahs-aca-open-enrollment-numbers-way-up-over-last-year/a44692-1>

Audio: <http://www.publicnewsservice.org/mp3.php?f=rss-44692-1.mp3>

SALT LAKE CITY - A total of 140,221 people in Utah signed up for a health-insurance plan through the Affordable Care Act during the open-enrollment period that ended Feb. 15, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Jason Stevenson, communications director at the Utah Health Policy Project, a nonprofit organization that helps people in Utah get health coverage, said the numbers reflect a big increase over last year.



"That was well above what we were expecting," he said. "Our initial goal was about 105,000, but it just kept on going up and up, and it's been very busy over the past two weeks as the enrollment deadline closed on Feb. 15."

It appears that about 40 percent enrolled for the first time, with the rest re-enrolling, Stevenson said, adding that about 80 percent of those who enrolled are eligible for a government premium subsidy.

Stevenson said the enrollment process is much smoother than it was last year and people also seem to have more knowledge about the Affordable Care Act. He said strong word-of-mouth advertising also seems to have played a role in the strong enrollment numbers.

"As more and more people got this insurance, they started talking about it," he said. "They said, 'Hey look, you can get insured for \$50 a month. Get your whole family signed up for \$150 per month,' and that word of mouth has really spread."

According to HHS reports, 11.4 million consumers selected plans or were automatically re-enrolled during the three-month open-enrollment period. That report is online at [hhs.gov](http://hhs.gov).