

# CT exchange's first month: 7,615 people enrolled, 53 percent in private coverage

By: **ARIELLE LEVIN BECKER** | November 1, 2013

In its first month, Access Health CT, the state's health insurance exchange, enrolled 7,615 people in health care coverage, according to figures released Friday.

Of those, 53 percent -- 4,065 -- have signed up for private insurance plans. The other 47 percent are signed up for Medicaid.

In addition, 55 small businesses have signed up for coverage through Access Health's small business exchange. Altogether they have 306 employees.

Created by the health law commonly known as Obamacare, the exchange sells insurance offered by private companies and enrolls people in Medicaid. The health law aims to reduce the number of uninsured people in the country by expanding Medicaid to cover people at higher income levels and providing federal subsidies to reduce the cost of premiums for private coverage.

The insurance plans sold by Access Health take effect in 2014. The open enrollment period runs through March 31, but anyone who wants coverage to begin Jan. 1 must sign up by Dec. 15.

In many states, Medicaid enrollment has matched or outpaced enrollment in private insurance plans so far. Connecticut is relatively unique, though, because it began expanding its Medicaid program in 2010, shortly after the health law passed. The state has covered adults without minor children earning up to 56 percent of the poverty level since 2010, and will expand the income limit to 138 percent of the poverty level as of Jan. 1.

Access Health plans to release information about enrollment every two weeks. During the first two weeks after launching Oct. 1, the exchange provided daily enrollment updates, but has since stopped. CEO Kevin Counihan said earlier this week that the White House has encouraged states to report monthly, but Access Health's board wasn't comfortable with that.

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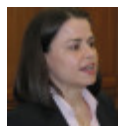
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