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Affordable Care Act sign-ups near deadline in Connecticut

By [Judy Benson](#) Day Staff Writer

Soon, Analia Mountzoures of Niantic will be able to take herself and her 10-year-old daughter to the doctor without worrying about how she'll pay for it.

"I've been about a year without insurance," she said Tuesday night, as she left a health insurance enrollment fair at the Community Health Center in New London. "Now, I'm very pleased."

With the help of one of the six enrollment counselors at the event, Mountzoures signed herself up for an Anthem Silver plan and her daughter for coverage through the state's HUSKY B program. She was one of 29 people who attended the event at the clinic, and one of thousands statewide to sign up this week for health insurance through the state's online marketplace, Access Health CT, just ahead of the midnight March 31 deadline.

While the deadline for signing up through the federal website created under the Affordable Care Act has been extended into April, Connecticut and other states with their own online exchanges are keeping the March 31 deadline, said Kathleen Tallarita, spokeswoman for Access Health CT. Those without insurance after that date will be assessed an annual penalty of \$95 or 1 percent of household income, whichever is greater, Tallarita said. Open enrollment won't be offered again until November. To get as many people signed up as possible before the Monday deadline, Access Health CT has launched a "March to Enrollment" campaign around the state, with extended hours for its call center and health enrollment fairs. United Community & Family Services in Norwich will host two enrollment fairs before the deadline.

"Every enrollment event we've been doing has been packed," Tallarita said. "Our website has been cranking."

About 1,500 to 2,000 people per day have been signing up this week, she added, either accessing the online marketplace on their own, or at an enrollment fair, or meeting with a trained assister at health and social service organizations.

More than 170,000 people have signed up for health insurance since Access Health CT was activated this fall. Of those, 64,450 signed up for plans offered by three private insurers - Anthem, ConnectiCare and HealthyCT - and the rest qualified for coverage through Medicaid or HUSKY. That exceeds the original goal of signing 100,000 uninsured Connecticut residents up by March 31.

Stefan Kostolitz, one of the certified application counselors at the New London clinic, said he signed up five new families over the four-hour event.

"It takes a little under an hour per person," he said. "Choosing a plan also takes time."

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For more information

The Access Health CT call center will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. through Friday; from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday; from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday; and from 8 a.m. to midnight Monday. The number is (855) 805-4325.

CORRECTED: United Community & Family Services in Norwich will host enrollment fairs from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday. For more information, call (860) 892-7042.

To sign up through the marketplace, or for information on where to find in-person assisters, certified application counselors and licensed insurance brokers, visit www.accesshealthct.com.