



Media Release

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Private Option Enrollments Continue to Increase in Every County, More than Half under 40

The latest county-level review of "Private Option" data shows enrollment continues to increase in every Arkansas county, with hundreds, and in many cases thousands, of people in each county now getting health care coverage under the new program, according to information released by the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) on Monday.

"We are pleased to see that enrollment has remained steady across the state," said DHS Director John Selig. "We can tell word is really getting out about the program and people are really seeing its value."

In all, 96,950 people had gained health care coverage through the Private Option as of February 6th. Coverage under the Private Option (formally known as the Health Care Independence Program) began Jan. 1. Of those enrolled so far, 87,061 were covered by a private health insurance plan and 9,889 had been determined to be better served by the traditional Medicaid program because of exceptional health care needs.

The 10 counties with the highest enrollment are: Pulaski County with 12,094; Washington County with 4,338; Garland County with 4,202; Benton County with 4,078; Craighead County with 3,318; Faulkner County with 3,303; Jefferson County with 3,263; Sebastian County with 3,122; Crittenden County with 2,560; and Saline County with 2,310.

The Department also released the ages of enrollees on Monday. As of February 6th, 53% of Private Option enrollees were under the age of 40. The ages break down as follows:

18-29= 25,437
30-39= 26,427
40-49= 20,435
50-59= 18,839
60+= 5,808

The Private Option allows the state of Arkansas to use federal Medicaid funding to pay the private health insurance premiums for eligible individuals who make no more than 138 percent of the federal poverty level. Those annual income limits, by household size, are:

Household of 1 -- \$15,856

Household of 2 -- \$21,404

Household of 3 -- \$26,951

Household of 4 -- \$32,499

Household of 5 -- \$38,047

Arkansans who, based on their income, believe they are eligible for the program can apply at www.access.arkansas.gov. People also may apply at their local DHS county office.