



Ohio uninsured cut more than half

Written by: Randy Tucker, August 10, 2015

of the major components of the Affordable Care Act and the expansion of Medicaid, according to a new Gallup Poll.

The uninsured rate for Ohioans 18 and older fell from 13.9 percent in 2013 — the year before the state’s health insurance marketplace began providing coverage and state’s Medicaid program opened to most low-income adults — to 6.1 percent through the first six months of this year, according to the survey.

Ohio was among 22 states with both expanded Medicaid and state-based or federally operated health insurance exchanges that saw an average reduction of 7.1 percentage points in their share of medically uninsured adults. By comparison, the 28 states that have only one of the insurance mechanisms saw a 5.3-point drop, on average.

No state reported a statistically significant increase in the percentage of uninsured, and the national average fell from 17.3 percent in 2013 to 11.7 percent in the first half of 2015, according to Gallup, which asked survey respondents whether they had health insurance coverage.

Although they were not asked specifically whether they obtained coverage as a result of the health care law, also known as Obamacare, it’s clear that the law requiring most Americans to obtain health insurance or pay a fine has had a dramatic impact on the uninsured rate, said Kathleen Gmeiner, project director for Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage.

“We had about 1.3 million uncovered people before the Affordable Care Act, and certainly, if you look at the percentage of those people who are now insured, it paints a pretty clear picture that the Affordable Care Act has made the primary difference in more people getting insurance,” Gmeiner said.

Overall, more than 595,000 Ohioans have enrolled in Medicaid under the health care law’s expanded guidelines, and more than 188,000 have signed up for commercial health plans through the state’s federally run health insurance marketplace, according to government figures.

Arkansas and Kentucky saw the most significant drops in uninsured rates between between 2013 and the first half of 2015 with the rate in Arkansas falling from 22.5 percent to 9.1 percent, and the rate in Kentucky falling from 20.4 percent to 9 percent.

Uninsured rates fell below 5 percent in seven states in the first six months of 2015: Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, Minnesota, Iowa, Connecticut and Hawaii, according to Gallup.

The percentage of medically uninsured Ohio adults fell 7.8 percentage points from 13.9 percent in 2013 to 6.1 percent through the first half of this year. The five states with the largest reduction in the percentage of uninsured since 2013 were:

Arkansas — down 13.4 percentage points to 9.1 percent

Kentucky — down 11.4 percentage points to 9.0 percent

Ohio uninsured cut more than half – Randy Tucker – Dayton Daily News

Oregon — down 10.6 percentage points to 8.8 percent

Rhode Island — down 10.6 percentage points to 2.7 percent

Washington — down 10.4 percentage points to 6.4 percent.

Source: Gallup