



April 21, 2014

## **HHS Secretary In NJ to Push Health Insurance Enrollment Ahead of Next Week's Deadline**

The deadline to sign up for health insurance under the Affordable Health Care Act is just one week away, and White House continued its last-minute push on Monday.

As CBS 2's Dick Brennan reported, the enrollment numbers are well below White House goals in many places around the country.

As WCBS 880's Alex Silverman reported, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius was on the campus on Montclair State University on Monday to urge those who are uninsured to sign up for coverage under the Affordable Care Act before the March 31 deadline.

"We don't intend to move that date," Sebelius said. "We are urging people to take advantage of the next eight days to go ahead and sign up."

Those who fail to sign up for health insurance by next Monday will not be able to enroll until next year and will have to pay a penalty on their taxes, Silverman explained.

The penalty is typically 1 percent of your income, Silverman reported.

Montclair State public health professor Lisa Lieberman said there are exceptions to that.

"If they turn 26, for example, and they go off their parents' plan, if they get divorced or married," said Lieberman.

She added this final effort to get the word out is key since millions still have not signed up for health insurance.

"It's taken a while for people to begin to understand that they are not purchasing [government health care](#), they're purchasing private health insurance," Lieberman said.

According to the Associated Press, millions remain uninsured despite desperate efforts by the Obama administration to sign people up. A new AP poll said only one fourth of the uninsured had tried to sign up through the state and federal marketplaces.

And critics have wondered whether enough young, healthy people will sign up to pay for it all. The push this week is geared toward them, Silverman reported.

“A 27-year-old earning about \$25,000 in New Jersey can find a plan for as little as \$114 a month. My guess is they can’t find a cell phone plan for \$114 a month,” said Sebelius.

Of course, many ran into well-documented problems with the Obamacare website as they first tried to sign up.

“The website was lagging in the beginning, but after that, I think it’s pretty smooth,” said graduate student Rodney Hammond, 27, of Carteret, N.J.

Hammond waited to sign up for Obamacare, but he has gotten in under the March 31 deadline and got a subsidized plan for only \$82 per month.

“Without a credit, I would not have signed up,” he said.

Meanwhile, New York State has signed up 717,000 people for Obamacare.

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