

# SOTU light on healthcare

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Publish Date: JAN 29,2014

Obama praised his signature healthcare reform legislation and its progress in his State of Union address yesterday, as expected. However, it was not his leading topic.

More than 3 million Americans under 26 years of age have health insurance through their parents' health plans. More than 9 million Americans have signed up for private health insurance or Medicaid coverage. And no American can be dropped or denied health insurance because of a pre-existing condition, Obama said.

"If you want to know the real impact this law is having, just talk to Governor Steve Beshear of Kentucky," Obama said. "Kentucky's not the most liberal part of the country, but he's like a man possessed when it comes to covering his commonwealth's families. They are our friends and neighbors...they are people who go to work every morning praying they don't get sick. No one deserves to live that way."

According to Kev Coleman, head of research and data for HealthPocket, the midterm elections might have lawmakers shying away from additional reforms.

"While the elimination of application rejections based on pre-existing conditions was appropriately highlighted, much was left unsaid about the state of the exchanges across the country and the cost of privately purchased insurance for those who don't qualify for subsidies," said Coleman in a statement. "The president did express openness to additional ideas for health reform but it is unclear what reforms he would embrace if it entailed modification of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)."

## Get covered

Obama also encouraged every American to help out anyone they knew who didn't have health insurance to sign up and get coverage by the deadline of March 31. Likely as a prompt for young invincibles to sign up, he also asked mothers to call their children and tell them to get covered.

"People are finding the cost of Obamacare too great to bear, and as a result, many are choosing not to participate," Rob Wilson, President of Employco USA, said in a statement. "In particular, young, healthy people are opting out of insurance, and that means that the cost of Obamacare must be carried by taxpayers, all while millions of people still go uninsured in this country."

Obama didn't mention the glitches with healthcare.gov or the state exchanges that caused millions of visitors delays in signing up for coverage. Federal officials expect 7 million to enroll by the end of March.

"Regardless of the speech last night, managed care is going to continue to evolve," said David Friend, MD, Managing Director at BDO USA. "The quality of information that is flowing to managed care health plans and executives will need to improve in order for the system to handle the increased number of patients. We expect that improvement to continue over time and for the system to continue to develop at an even faster pace."

## Repeal and replace

Acknowledging more than 40 votes to attempt repeal of ACA, Obama also asked Republicans to stop trying to thwart the policy that is helping millions of Americans.

Three Republican Senators have crafted a new plan called the Patient CARE Act, which they introduced one day ago to replace the PPACA, according to a [Forbes report](#).

Under the plan introduced by Senators Tom Coburn (Okla.), Richard Burr (N.C.), and Orrin Hatch (Utah), the PPACA would be repealed and replaced with "sustainable, patient-centered reforms."



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