

IMPulse

Intermountain Media Pulse

A TRUETONE INCORPORATED COMPANY

**news
CLIP**

11623 Lake Shore
Nampa, ID 83686
(208) 880-9814

FOR YOUR INFORMATION
The Idaho Statesman
Boise, Idaho
Saturday Feb. 11, 2017
by **Audrey Dutton**
Page 1 of 1

Obamacare demand sets record in Idaho

Idaho has resisted the Affordable Care Act at nearly every turn — including the state’s controversial decision to reject a federally funded Medicaid expansion.

But when it came to buying insurance plans that were ushered in by the law, Idaho residents have turned out in droves to Your Health Idaho exchange. For years, the state has topped per-capita enrollment rankings.

This year, demand for Obamacare health plans in Idaho was strong enough to defy a national dip.

When open enrollment closed Jan. 31, about 106,000 people had chosen a health insurance plan from the Idaho exchange, according to Pat Kelly, executive director of Your Health Idaho.

That was about 11,000 more than last year, and about 27 percent were new members.

“We have never seen more interest in Your Health Idaho,” he said. “We know changes are coming to the health insurance marketplace, but we want our customers to know our entire team remains committed to serving them.”

Sign-ups on the federal healthcare.gov fell slightly, from 9.6 million in 2016 to 9.2 million this year.

One big difference? The new White House under President Donald Trump pulled \$5 million of advertising in the days leading up to the sign-up deadline.

But Idaho’s exchange also cut way back on advertising — from \$1.2 million last year to \$650,000 this year.

Kelly said three factors probably drove the surge in enrollments:

A Idaho front-loaded its outreach. The state-run exchange always planned to taper off on ads and outreach, Kelly said.

A Insurance agents made themselves a “really critical part of our ecosystem with the exchange,” he said. “We have over 900 agents and enrollment counselors across the state who are able to sit down ... one-on-one.”

A While premiums rose and insurers carved out special networks that limit consumers’ choices of where they get medical care, the Idaho exchange has expanded its insurance menu. In other states, insurance companies have pulled out. Idaho this year had five companies selling 225 types of plans.

“The real difference in Idaho is local control, and we are independent,” Kelly said.

###

Copyright 2017 The Idaho Statesman