

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Washington, DC 20201-0001

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The Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515





JUN - 7 2019

Administrator
Washington, DC 20201

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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Blunt Rochester:

Thank you for your letters regarding the effectiveness of marketing and outreach efforts for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). The Secretary has asked that I respond to your letter on behalf of both the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). We appreciate hearing from you on this important matter.

Data from the Health Insurance Exchanges 2019 Open Enrollment Report shows that plan selections for Exchange plans in the 50 states and D.C. remained steady at 11.4 million, a small decrease from the same time last year. Additionally, demographic data provided in the report also demonstrate stability on the Exchanges. The percentage of young adults between the ages of 18 and 34 who selected a plan through HealthCare.gov remained unchanged from the prior year, at 26 percent.

While the overall number of plan selections decreased slightly from the previous year, this represents remarkably steady enrollment at a time when a strengthening economy and job market may be reducing the need and demand for subsidized health coverage. There are several factors that may have contributed to this year's lower enrollment. At the time Open Enrollment began, there had been more than two million jobs added to the economy compared to the prior year, which resulted in the lowest unemployment rate in nearly fifty years. More people in jobs means more people with access to job-based health coverage, which should reduce demand for subsidized coverage. In addition, because of the expansion of Virginia's Medicaid population, CMS believes that a substantial number of enrollees in the Exchange during 2018 would be eligible for expanded Medicaid.

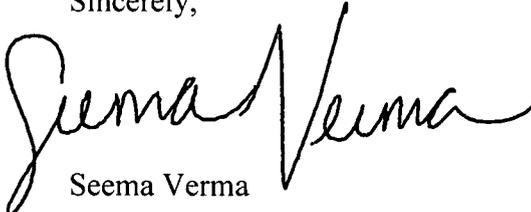
As was the case last year, CMS remained committed to our primary goal of providing a seamless enrollment experience for HealthCare.gov consumers, and data show that we achieved this goal. Consistent with last year, the consumer satisfaction rate at the call center remained at an all-time high—averaging 90 percent—throughout the entire Open Enrollment Period and, for the second year in a row, CMS did not need to deploy an online waiting room during the final days of Open Enrollment. As a result, HealthCare.gov consumers were able to shop and pick a plan with minimal interruption throughout the entire enrollment period.

consumers, as well as 3.2 million outreach emails to help Navigators, agents and brokers assist consumers. In addition, senior Administration officials, including the Secretary and myself, encouraged people to enroll through television and radio interviews broadcast to more than 195 stations across the country.

One of this Administration's priorities is to deliver affordable coverage options to the men and women left behind by the PPACA. I believe it is important that all Americans have access to high quality, affordable health coverage that meets their needs and the needs of their families. Unfortunately, the PPACA is not working for far too many Americans, particularly those middle-class Americans who cannot receive subsidies and are shut out from access to affordable coverage options.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this issue. We are focused on improving our nation's health care system by working to expand access to affordable and high quality coverage options, and we look forward to working with you to achieve these goals. Should you have additional questions, please contact the CMS Office of Legislation.

Sincerely,



Seema Verma