



OBAMACARE NAVIGATORS SAY ENROLLMENT RUNNING 'SMOOTHLY'

Cayuga, Seneca county navigators say enrollment for Obamacare is running 'smoothly'



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For its second opening act, the Affordable Care Act came prepared.

The original enrollment period for the controversial ACA — more commonly referred to as Obamacare — debuted Oct. 1, 2013, with a series of website glitches that made it difficult for customers to sign up for coverage. Navigators had trouble logging in to the New York State Health Benefits Exchange, and customers got stuck in

virtual waiting rooms.

Despite its initial trip-ups, the first open enrollment period still ended successfully, officials said.

According to [local navigators](#), 960,762 New Yorkers successfully obtained health insurance during the October 2013 to April 2014 enrollment period, with 3,138 individuals in Cayuga County and 1,154 people in Seneca County gaining coverage. More than 70 percent of the new customers in both counties did not previously have health insurance.

So far, the second round has not been encumbered by digital bugs.

Jennifer Watkins, a health insurance navigator with the Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency, said the open enrollment period for 2015 health care coverage is "going very smoothly" so far.

"The website is functioning very well," she said. "There has been no delays, and we have been moving very quickly from application to application."

When enrollment reopened Nov. 15, Watkins said the call center was bogged down with calls, leading to slight delays. Since then, however, calls have been answered quickly.

While she can't yet disclose how many people have signed up or have applied to sign up, Watkins said interest from Seneca and Cayuga county residents has been high.

"We have had quite a few inquiries. We have a lot of back-to-back appointments, and a lot of walk-in appointments," she said. "We have been very busy."

But there are still plenty of individuals and families in Cayuga and Seneca counties living without health care, Watkins said.

To see what the ACA has to offer, she said residents are welcome to fill out an application with local navigators. The application takes about 30 minutes to complete — and comes without strings.

"We can show everyone the options," Watkins said. "If something works out for them and is a good decision for them to make, we can certainly help them move forward, but there's no obligation."

Small businesses with between two to 50 employees can also work with the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce to obtain health insurance for their employees.

And with enrollment sites located across both counties, Watkins said there are plenty of places to ask questions and get answers.

"A lot of people still don't know we're out here," she said. "We're ready to help."

The open enrollment period for 2015 health care coverage will end on Feb. 15.

Enrollment sites for individuals, families

The Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency serves as a navigator for individuals and families in both Cayuga and Seneca counties. To contact the Cayuga County office, call (315) 255-1703. To contact the Seneca County office, call (315) 539-567. To view the updated enrollment site schedule, which is subject to change monthly, visit cscaa.com.

CAYUGA COUNTY

Auburn Housing Authority, 20 Thornton Ave., Auburn. Hours: TBA.

Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency, Site I, 89 York St., Suite 1, Auburn. Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays; 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays; 9 a.m. to noon on the first, third and fifth Saturday of the month.

Cayuga Works Career Center, 197 Franklin St., Auburn. Hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesdays.

Fair Haven Community Church, 13367 Richmond Ave., Fair Haven. Hours: 4 to 6:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month.

Port Byron High School, 30 Maple Ave., Port Byron. Hours: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesdays.

Powers Library, 29 Church St., Moravia. Hours: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. the second and fourth Saturday of the month.

Scipio Town Hall, Route 34 and Quarry Road, Scipio Center. Hours, 6 to 8 p.m. the second and fourth Monday of the month.

Stewart B. Lang Memorial Library, 2577 E. Main St., Cato. Hours: Noon to 7 p.m. Thursdays.

Trinity United Christian Church, 163 Cayuga St., Union Springs. Hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays.

Weedsport Free Library, 2795 E. Brutus St., Weedsport. Hours: 2:15 to 6 p.m. Wednesdays.

SENECA COUNTY

Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency, Seneca office, 23 Center St., Waterloo. Hours: 3 to 5 p.m. Mondays; 2:30 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays; noon to 7 p.m. Thursdays; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the first and third Friday of the month; 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the second and fourth Saturday of the month.

Ovid Federated Church, 7137 Main St., Ovid. Hours: by appointment.

Seneca Falls Community Center, 35 Water St., Seneca Falls. Hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesdays.

Enrollment site for small businesses

The Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce serves as the enrollment navigator for small businesses with two to 50 employees in Cayuga and Seneca counties. For information, call (315) 252-7291.

Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce, 2 State St., Auburn. Hours: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays. Thursday evening appointments available by request.