

ACA Sign-ups Reach 8.8 Million as Repeal Efforts Start

By Zachary Tracer

(Bloomberg) – Affordable Care Act sign-ups for 2017 coverage rose about 2.3% from the same time last year, even as efforts to repeal President Barack Obama’s health care reform begin in Congress.

About 8.8 million people enrolled in individual insurance plans through the HealthCare.gov website as of Dec. 31, compared with 8.6 million last year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said in an e-mailed statement. The figures are the first to include automatic re-enrollments, providing the most complete picture to date of participation.



[Image credit: Bloomberg]

Sign-ups for ACA plans are a key measure of the program’s success, as Republicans in Congress have begun efforts to repeal at least parts of the 2010 health law. The Obama administration has been working to encourage people to join health plans after the presidential election victory of Republican Donald Trump, who has promised to do away with the program.

Obama met with Democratic lawmakers on Wednesday about strategies to defend the Affordable Care Act, or ACA. Republican Vice President-elect Mike Pence, meanwhile, met with Republicans to discuss strategy for repealing it, and said the program has imposed hardship on Americans.

“The first order of business is to repeal and replace Obamacare,” he said in a press conference. “We’re going to keep our promise,” he said.

Wednesday’s report only includes sign-ups in the 39 states that use the HealthCare.gov marketplace. Some states, such as New York and California, run their own systems. The enrollment season for 2017 ACA plans started on Nov. 1 and runs through the end of this month.