

Number of insured swell in California

By Victoria Colliver, San Francisco Chronicle

More than 70 percent of California residents who were uninsured before the Affordable Care Act went into effect now have coverage, even though some worries about costs and access to medical care persist, according to a study released Thursday.

The study, the fourth in a series of surveys of Californians who did not have health insurance in 2013, found that 72 percent have since obtained coverage, either through their employer, the state exchange created by the federal health law or through Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program for the poor. This number is slightly higher than the 68 percent reported last year, a gain that represents hundreds of thousands of newly insured Californians. The state had the largest number of uninsured in the country, with about 6 million residents lacking coverage in 2013.

The Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonprofit health policy research organization in Menlo Park, has been following more than 1,000 Californians who lacked health insurance in September 2013, before the exchange and the major reforms in the health care act went into effect, through the past three open enrollment periods, the latest of which ended Jan. 31.

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