

THE Vitals

Affordable Care Act

Despite problems, fewer adults uninsured since ACA passage

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has lots of problems: expensive plans, high deductibles, payer complaints and constant political battles.

But according to data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics, the ACA has had at least some success in achieving one its primary goals: the number of uninsured adults has fallen since 2010.

From January 2010 through September 2015, the number of adults aged 18 to 64 without health insurance dropped.

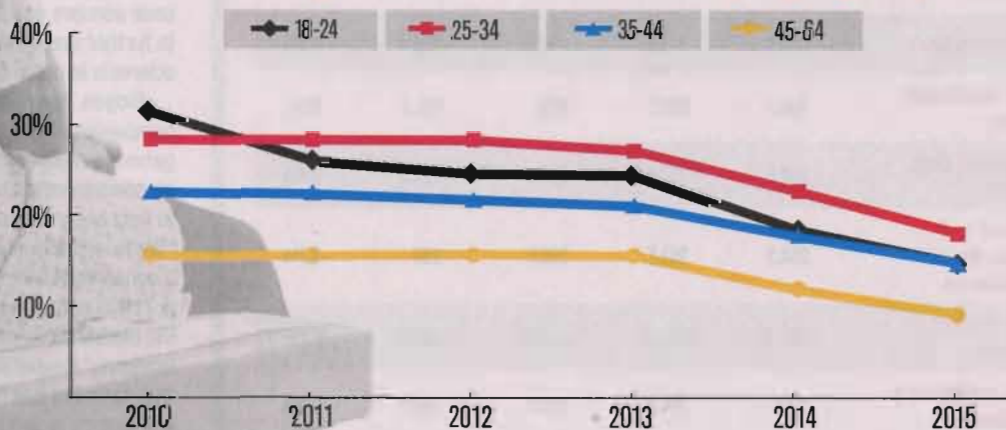
"From 1997 through 2010, the percentage of adults aged 18-64 who were uninsured at the time of interview generally increased," wrote the authors, who used data based on the National Health Interview Survey. "More recently, the percentage of uninsured decreased from 22.3% in 2010 to 12.9% in the first 9 months of 2015."

The largest drop was in the 18-24 age group, falling from a non-insurance rate of above 30% to below 15% in late 2015. This trend continues across all adult age groups.

The uninsurance rate also fell dramatically for Americans described as "poor" or "near-poor." Those groups had an uninsurance rate above 40% at the beginning of 2010. By September 2015, the "poor" had a rate of 26% and the "near-poor" dropped to 24%. Americans described as "not-poor" saw their uninsurance rate drop only slightly, from above 10% to 7.7%.

In terms of racial demographics, hispanics and black Americans saw the largest drop in uninsurance rate, followed by Asians and whites, with more moderate drops. Hispanics, for example, saw their rate drop from above 40% in 2010 to below 28% in 2015.

Percentage of uninsured adults by age group



Note: Data are based on 100 household interviews of a sample of the civilian noninstitutionalized population.
Source: CDC/NCHS National Health Interview Survey