As Online Obamacare Enrollment Fails, ‘Glitches’ Endanger Personal Data

CCHF: Enrollment in Obamacare Exchanges Dumps Private Data in Huge Federal Database Where It’s Accessible and Exposed

ST. PAUL, Minn.—Since October 1, enrolling online in Obamacare’s federal health insurance exchange has been an epic failure, as technological glitches abound in a poor and outdated IT system.

Obamacare supporters say the glitches, delays and problems with the enrollment process are due to the popularity of the health care program. But HHS has now been forced to admit to major technological failures. Should Americans be pointing and clicking their way to a place where their private personal, financial and health data is entered into an IT system fraught with security flaws and susceptible to fraud?

Twila Brase, patient advocate and co-founder of Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom, gives a resounding “NO!”

“Americans should be very concerned about entering their private data into a faulty and unproven system with countless technological glitches,” Brase said. “The government is asking us to plug our personal information, such as our Social Security number, employment information, date of birth and tax status into a system that is not even working. This new data collection opens the door for our data to be compromised, misused by the IRS and other government agencies—and even hacked into by identity thieves.”

According to a recent USA Today opinion piece by Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Americans’ personal information is the subject of hundreds of thousands of hacking attempts worldwide. The information being plugged into state health exchanges through the Federal Data Services Hub will be no different.

“Social Security numbers, employment information, birth dates, health records and tax returns are among the personal data that will be transmitted to this hub, consolidating an unprecedented amount of information,” Rogers wrote. “Every shred of data one would need to steal your identity or access your confidential credit information would be available at the fingertips of a skilled hacker, producing a staggering security threat.”
Additionally, the Office of the Inspector General flagged several critical tasks that remained to be completed in its most recent report in August, creating real concerns that the Hub had not been properly tested before it went live on October 1. In fact, the Hub was scheduled to be last tested only two weeks before it was supposed to be fully operational.

Evidence that the exchanges and the hub were not ready on October 1 is already mounting. According to Rogers’ USA Today article, “Exchanges immediately began experiencing technical difficulties as enrollment began and information technology experts have pointed to the hastily constructed software design as the leading cause. It is hard to imagine the hub is not experiencing similar technical problems. In fact, the Wall Street Journal reported this week that the hub was making inaccurate determinations of eligibility for federal subsidies – calling into question the viability of the whole system.”

*Added Brase, “The government had three and a half years and has awarded $1.4 billion in contracts to build and perfect this system and work out any IT problems. Yet, in the two weeks since online enrollment has been live, it still doesn’t work correctly. And, of course, there’s a catch. Visitors to the health exchange sites must enter their personal data before they can even research prices and plans for coverage. If they decide to opt out of coverage—because of any number of reasons such as price or privacy—the government has already captured their data.*

“It’s a scary prospect to think of Americans entering their private data into a system that’s likely full of security holes that could invite thieves and fraudsters,” she continued. “No one should trust this flawed system with their data. The government promised that they could build it, but they have created something unusable and unstable—and it should be shut down.”

In the meantime, what can Americans do? Brase offers two suggestions:

1. **Opt-out of the Obamacare health plan and refuse to enroll.** *CCHF* has created a [special section of its web site](http://www.cchfreedom.org) that provides citizens with a form they can complete to declare that they are opting out of “any and all participation in the national Obamacare Exchange system.” *Brase* adds that there are smarter, more affordable and more viable options to government health care. She encourages Americans to take steps to find private insurance coverage, including through [private exchanges](http://www.cchfreedom.org), or to use legal alternatives to enrolling in the unsecured and fraud-prone government exchanges.

2. **Boycott pharmacies that support Obamacare.** Pharmacy chains Rite-Aid and CVS are not only supporting Obamacare but also promoting it in their 20,000 locations by posting Obamacare information and hosting insurance agents and Obamacare “navigators” in their stores. Call Rite-Aid at (717) 761-2633 and CVS at (401) 770-2898 and let them know that [Obamacare is not a product you want to shop for](http://www.cchfreedom.org) in their stores.

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