

Limited Choice of Healthcare Insurers in Some Parts of the Southwest

The New York Times is reporting that all of Arizona, much of Nevada, and portions of Utah and Colorado will have only one insurer available under the Affordable Care Act (ACA, Obamacare) marketplace (Figure 1) (1).

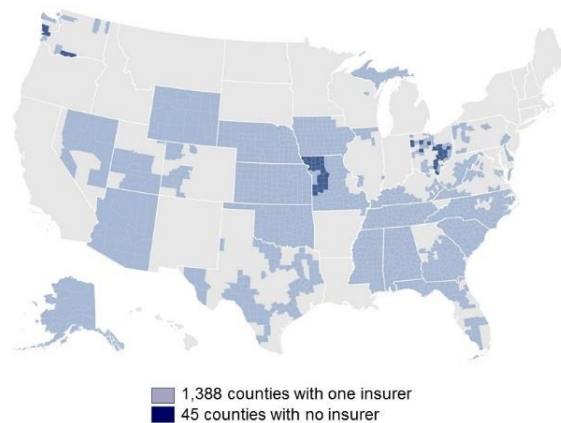


Figure 1. New York Times compilation of insurance company announcements for providing coverage under the ACA or Obamacare.

About 35,000 people buying insurance in Affordable Care Act marketplaces in 45 counties could have no choice in carriers in Ohio and Missouri (Figure 1), This would be the first time that has happened since the marketplaces were opened in 2014.

Some insurance companies are still deciding what they will do in 2018, and others may reverse course, so these numbers could go up or down.

Most Americans get health insurance from a job or government program, but about 22 million people buy individual policies under Obamacare. More than half of them use Obamacare marketplaces, where most of them get a federal tax credit to help pay for coverage. The rest buy directly from an insurer or broker, outside the Obamacare marketplaces. A recent New York Times analysis showed that many insurers are now choosing to sell exclusively outside the marketplaces, where their customers are not eligible for federal subsidies. Because customers cannot use subsidies for these plans, many may not be able to afford coverage.

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Reference

Park H, Carlsen A. For the first time, 45 counties could have no insurer in the Obamacare marketplaces. New York Times. June 9, 2017. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/09/us/counties-with-one-or-no-obamacare-insurer.html> (accessed 6/12/17).