

ENROLLMENT FOR THE INSURANCE MARKETPLACE OPENS THIS WEEKEND



By [Tom Abrahams](#)

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HOUSTON (KTRK) --

If you need health insurance, the open enrollment period for health care, through the president's health care law, begins this weekend. Right now, you can "window shop" for plans that fit your family's needs. Eyewitness News reporter Tom Abrahams talked with an expert about changes this year.

The open enrollment period begins on November 15. It runs through mid-February and the hope is from patients to doctors that the process runs more smoothly this year than last.

Felix Escano is a certified application counselor at Vecino community health clinic in Denver Harbor. "I help clients apply at the marketplace," he explains. "I guide them and show them what options that they have."

It's his job to help people make sure they navigate what was -- last year -- a complicated online process fraught with technical issues.

"We never tell them exactly what they should choose, we just lead them to the right plan," Escano said.

He's already noticed the new site has streamlined the process, making it easier than it was 12 months ago.

Last year Vecino helped 300 people apply and they expect at least that many this year.

But what do doctors think about Obamacare one year in? Do they think the Affordable Care act is something that's actually helping patients get well?

Dr. Clare Hawkins is with Legacy Community Health Services in Baytown. The clinic accepts all levels of Obamacare. He says it's critical for patients to understand what type of insurance they're purchasing, making sure they can see the doctors they want to see.

"We're encouraging patients to be very careful during this enrollment period to know what they're purchasing," Dr. Hawkins said.

Not all doctors like the marketplace. In a survey of 20,000 of them, 9 percent of them from Texas, The Physicians Foundation found that just 3.7 percent gave the marketplace an A and 24.7 percent gave it an F. And 28 and half percent said they have no plans to participate.

However, Gallup just released an interesting poll this afternoon in which it reveals that 66 percent of Americans are satisfied with how the healthcare system works for them.