

# Obamacare is in hiding until after the election: Column

Robert Laszewski 6:57 p.m. EDT October 13, 2014

*How our government is obscuring facts about your health insurance until after the election.*



(Photo: Chip Somodevilla, Getty Images)

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The second Obamacare open enrollment is scheduled to [begin](#) on November 15th and end on February 15th. Instead of learning critical lessons from the mistakes of the first open enrollment fiasco, the Obama administration appears to be trying to silence potential critics.

Last week, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that the administration sent an email to the insurance companies participating in Obamacare telling them to keep their mouths shut about the testing of the new health law's enrollment system saying, that unlike last year, they would require "all testers (the insurance companies) to acknowledge the confidentiality of this process" before they would be allowed to participate. The administration reminded insurers that their confidentiality agreement with the Obama

administration means that insurance executives "will not use, disclose, post to a public forum, or in any way share Test Data with any person or entity, included but not limited to media..." This includes any "results of this testing exercise and any information describing or otherwise relating to the performance or functionality" of the Obamacare enrollment and eligibility system.

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A year ago when the Obamacare enrollment system [crashed](#) and shut out millions of people trying to sign up for health insurance the only credible information we had came from the insurers who were participating in the program.

During Obamacare's first few weeks the administration refused to admit anything was wrong. In fact, just as consumers were vainly trying to sign up for insurance then Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius [encouraged](#) people to keep trying saying, "We're working to ensure it's easy to use," arguing that more than 13 million people had visited the site, proof of "extraordinary" interest. She told all of us that HealthCare.gov was "open for business."

But as we now know, the truth was a lot different.

That's not the only way the administration continues to use dubious methods to manage public opinion.

Last month the administration announced that [7.3 million](#) people were insured under Obamacare as of mid-August. That was the first announcement of enrollment made by the administration since [April](#). They provided just one number and no backup and admitted that they had been collecting enrollment data from insurers all along. They conveniently reported this figure just before enrollment is expected to take a big fall when thousands of people hit the deadline to clear up discrepancies in their income and legal resident status or risk losing subsidies or coverage altogether. We still don't know how many lost coverage or are still in limbo.

The administration has trumpeted the [low](#) average health insurer [rate](#) increases for 2015. But these low average increases have more often been low because the majority of insurers who did not get much enrollment have cut their rates while the insurers that got most of the enrollment have raised their rates. But current participants in the 36 federally run state insurance exchanges and most state-run exchanges [won't see their own](#)

[renewal rates](#) until the open enrollment is about to begin. In short, the administration is comparing different plans with different benefits between 2014 and 2015. Those who want to keep the same plan might have big price increases.

So why all this effort to keep clear information away from the public? Why put a gag rule on insurance companies from talking about just how well the second version of HealthCare.gov is working when we will all know anyway in less than six weeks when open enrollment begins?

Why not open their books and give us a good look at who is really enrolled in the program? Why not now let consumers know now what their 2015 Obamacare health insurance rates look like?

For the same reason the administration [delayed](#) the start of the 2015 open enrollment from last year's October 1st start date to November 15th this year.

There is an election on November 4th. Every administration spins the facts. But when it comes to a lack of openness and transparency about Obamacare, this administration has no peer.

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