

# RICE UNIVERSITY SPINS DATA FOR OBAMACARE



by KRISTIN TATE (/COLUMNISTS/KRISTIN-TATE) | 22 Apr 2014 | [POST A COMMENT \(/BREITBART-TEXAS/2014/04/22/RICE-UNIVERSITY-SPINS-FEDERAL-DATA-TO-PROMOTE-OBAMACARE#COMMENTS\)](#)

**HOUSTON, TEXAS--**A new study helps confirm assertions that Texans do not want or need Obamacare. According to an April report (<http://bakerinstitute.org/research/early-effects-affordable-care-act-health-insurance-coverage-texas-2014/>) by the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University, the percentage of uninsured adults in Texas has only declined by 1.3 percent, from 24.8 to 23.5, since Obamacare took effect in September 2013.

The report further stated that 746,000 Texans purchased health insurance through the Obamacare marketplace. Of those individuals, about 30 percent were previously uninsured.

John Davidson, a senior health care policy analyst at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, told Breitbart Texas that the actual number of enrolled Texans is likely to be significantly lower than the released figures claim. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) can only count the number of individuals selecting plans on the online marketplace--not those actually paying for them.

"The 746,000 Texans who purchased plans are people who enrolled but not people who necessarily paid for an insurance plan," Davidson said. "There's an assumption that if you've enrolled, you're going to pay. The Rice [University] report does not seem to make the distinction between enrolling and paying. HHS has not provided any information about how many people who have paid, because they are not requiring insurance companies to tell them who has paid for plans and who has not. And the researchers at Rice apparently did not include questions about payment in their survey."

He continued, "It is significant that neither HHS nor Rice has tried to get that information from insurance companies operating on the exchange or from enrollees. If they did, we would have a much more realistic and modest view of what the ACA is doing nationwide with insurance. If you don't pay for a plan, then you're not actually covered."

Page four of Rice's study explains how the researchers got their figures. It appears that the authors use "enroll" and "insured" interchangeably.

The report stated, "A total of 4.6% of those surveyed in HRMS Texas March 2014 responded yes to the question: 'Did you enroll in a health insurance plan through the marketplace, also known as Healthcare.gov?' Applying this response rate to the adult population ages 18 to 64 in Texas equates 746,000 Texans who enrolled in a plan through the marketplace by early March."

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Following the completion of their study, researchers at Rice University released statements that portrayed Obamacare in a wholly positive light.

Vivian Ho, the chair in health economics at Rice's Baker Institute, said, "Given that Texas has consistently had the highest percent of uninsured residents among the 50 states for several years, the insurance provisions of the ACA are expected to play a substantial role in providing coverage to the close to 5 million adults who reportedly lacked health insurance in the state in 2010-2011. However, technical problems plagued the electronic websites for the Health Insurance Marketplaces in each state when they opened in October 2013, and some of these problems still exist today."

Ho and Elena Marks, president and CEO of the Episcopal Health Foundation, co-authored the new study at the Baker Institute. The pair argued that the relatively small increase in insured individuals since Obamacare's implementation may be tied to the state's decision to not expand Medicaid.

Marks said, "In March 2014, the percentage of uninsured in Texas had declined only slightly...The decline in uninsured is similar to that experienced by states that did not expand Medicaid under the ACA, and it falls far short of the 4- percentage-point drop in uninsured experienced by states that elected to expand Medicaid. These percentage figures mask the impact of the Marketplace on the lives of hundreds of thousands of Texans."

Breitbart Texas previously reported (<http://www.breitbart.com/Breitbart-Texas/2014/04/05/Media-Spin-Medicaid-Enrollment-Numbers-as-Obamacare-Wins>) on the media's effort to credit Obamacare for a national increase in Medicaid enrollment.

According to a report released by the [Department of Health and Human Services](http://www.dhs.gov/xmain/main.do?nav=Department%20of%20Health%20and%20Human%20Services) (<http://www.dhs.gov/xmain/main.do?nav=Department%20of%20Health%20and%20Human%20Services>), more than 3 million people have enrolled in Medicaid since October. Relatively speaking, however, 3 million is not a substantial increase in Medicaid enrollment. In some states like Texas, enrollment rates have actually decreased.

Across the 48 states that reported data to the HHS, a total of 62.3 million individuals are enrolled in Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program. This marks a 5.2 percent increase over the average monthly enrollment for July through September of 2013, according to the HHS report.

"An increase of 5.2 percent isn't that significant," Davidson told Breitbart Texas. "Over time, Medicaid enrollment has gradually increased" regardless of the ACA, he added.

Nine states, including Texas, have seen a decrease in Medicaid and CHIP enrollment since Obamacare went into effect. Since October, Texas saw a (-0.4) percent increase in enrollment. HHS data claims that 4.25 million people are currently enrolled in the state, down from 4.44 million in September 2013. Despite this, the mainstream media has been using the fresh numbers to tout Obamacare's "success" at helping individuals and families secure healthcare.

Given the actual enrollment statistics, however, it is easy to surmise that Texans do not want Obamacare.

In December [Governor Rick Perry](http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20131231-rick-perry-you-cant-dress-up-the-failures-of-obamacare-ecce) (<http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20131231-rick-perry-you-cant-dress-up-the-failures-of-obamacare-ecce>) summed up the attitude of Texans towards Obamacare.

He was quoted in the *Dallas Morning News* saying, "People all across the country have witnessed what a disaster this program has been from its earliest stages, ranging from the \$600 million website debacle to the sad fact that President Barack Obama flat-out deceived the American people when he promised that those who like their coverage could keep it. To stem the bleeding, the administration is resorting to arbitrary delays for some Obamacare mandates, which only inject more confusion into the marketplace and with consumers."

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**FauxScienceSlayer** · a day ago

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2 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share >



**Jim Sweet** · a day ago

Hard to see how Rice is "spinning data for Obama" when it's simply using the limited data the government provides. My alma mater is a private university, not a state funded one. Beat up on HHS all you want, but recognize that those using the data provided by HHS have inherent limitations not of their own design or preference.

3 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share >



**Texas Akbar!!!** → Jim Sweet · a day ago

If Rice is lacking information not available it should be highlighted in their report because the study is worthless if it fails to present the true picture. The article said researchers at Rice apparently did not include questions about payment in their survey. Without payment, those who enrolled have no valid insurance. That means it is possible that the 1.3% increase could be a decrease. If Rice is not spinning for Obamacare they are at the very least negligent for releasing a report that does not reflect the truth,

3 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share >



**Jim Sweet** → Texas Akbar!!! · a day ago

A fairer criticism, but not what the headline accuses. I'd note that such a question invites a response that can't be verified. Self-reporting is always fraught with such dangers.

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**Bruiser in Houston** → Jim Sweet · 17 hours ago

You have to admit that Rice has always been a very left-leaning institution.

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**mrd92** → Bruiser in Houston • 16 hours ago

Yep... If you don't believe it, go to a Rice football game and watch the Marching Owl Band (MOB) at haltime skewer conservatives and the tea party with their "show". Although they can be pretty funny, I've noticed they never poke fun at the dems...

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Bruiser in Houston** → mrd92 • 16 hours ago

I'm afraid I haven't seen the MOB perform since the 80s. At A&M their "show" consisted of mocking the Aggie Band geometric formations by creating a boob.

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**Jim Sweet** → Bruiser in Houston • 12 hours ago

I was at the famous Rice/Aggie "fire hydrant" game in early 70s.

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