



July 17, 2014

Nueva York Estatus de Salud

As it prepares for a second enrollment period, the New York State of Health is boosting efforts to reach non-English speakers. Last month's report on exchange enrollment through April 15 showed that only 15% of New Yorkers who signed up on the exchange preferred to speak a language besides English. That compares with 36% of all those eligible to enroll, according to a study the state Department of Health commissioned in 2012. A fully Spanish website and health insurance application are being tested and will be ready for the enrollment period starting Nov. 15, said Donna Frescatore, the exchange's executive director. DOH also is adding languages to the telephone help system, which accommodates Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and Russian. "Just like there's not a one-size-fits-all health plan, there's not a one-size-fits-all application channel," Ms. Frescatore said. Language access "is a civil rights issue; we want to make sure people have access to a full range of services," said Shena Elrington, director of the health justice program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, one of the advocacy groups advising DOH on language access. "From a financial perspective, immigrants tend to be younger and healthier than citizens," she added, "so it makes sense to increase outreach to those groups."