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# 100,000 in State Missing Out on Health Care Benefits: Study

Language keeps many non-native English speakers from getting health care

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Over 100,000 Californians may miss out on tax credits for their healthcare due to language barriers, according to a UCLA study released Wednesday.

Only 42 percent of adults with limited English skills are likely to access the benefits, which are part of Obama's Affordable Care Act, the study found.

The Health Benefit Exchange is one of California's extensions of the ACA. It gives tax credits for people who aren't eligible for MediCAL, but who still need affordable healthcare.

Perhaps unsurprising to many Southern Californians, Spanish-speakers made up the majority of the people who were not accessing the health benefits they are eligible for. About 355,000 Spanish-speakers are projected to receive subsidies from the exchange in 2019.

Yet Chinese and Vietnamese-speakers in California are also included in the number of people who may not reap the benefits of the state program. About 31,000 Chinese-speakers and 13,000 Vietnamese speakers are eligible.

Now that the study has identified the issues facing the health care program, they will seek federal funding to reach out to these communities.

"We'll need to make sure that people of color are priorities, because these are the people who will benefit," said Ellen Wu with the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network, which also worked on the study.

One part of the problem is that some documents needed to apply for the exchange actually were not available in languages other than English. However, the study also cited other cases in which applicants didn't finish applying because they didn't believe the materials were even available in their language.

"This is not only the language of the documents," said Daphna Gans, a research scientist at the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and author of the study. "It goes far beyond that, and shows the need for outreach in a culturally realistic way."

[Click here to read the full study.](#)

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