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Statement from the Minnesota Council of Health Plans on the 30 percent drop in number of Minnesotans buying health insurance on their own

Today there are 30 percent fewer Minnesotans buying health insurance on their own than at this time last year. While MNsure's announcement today that 114,810 people bought these policies through the state's marketplace, fewer purchased health insurance directly from health plans. Total enrollment is just under 190,000, down from 270,400 in March 2016.

"MNsure is getting a bigger share of a smaller pie," said Jim Schowalter, president of the Minnesota Council of Health Plans. "While it's great that more people are getting help from the federal and state governments to pay their monthly premiums, the fact that so few people have signed up is alarming.

"The bad news is that fewer people will be helping to pay for really high medical bills. In the past about 5,300 people (1.6 percent of those who bought health insurance on their own) needed medical care totaling \$630 million," Schowalter concluded. "I'm concerned that fewer people paying premiums will mean more problems in the future."

Schowalter added that today's enrollment isn't final and actually overstates the number of people who will have insurance. Historically, people drop policies after signing up. The hope is that the number who drop decreases this year because of the help that is available to pay premiums.

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The Minnesota Council of Health Plans brings our country's top health insurance companies together to solve problems. We work in a space where our insurers put aside competitive concerns to work together with partners across the state to make medical care more effective and less expensive for everyone. Seven local health insurance companies that work with the Council serve local policyholders, not shareholders on Wall Street.