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Obamacare Pledge: Info on Applications 'Won't Be Used For Immigration Enforcement Purposes'

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Beginning with a [speech](#) last Thursday, President Obama is seeking to rejuvenate his administration's push to alter immigration laws and perhaps draw some attention away from the Obamacare launch debacle that has been dominating the headlines for much of October. The day following that speech, a new topic appeared on the Healthcare.gov website [entitled](#), "What do immigrant families need to know about the Marketplace?" While a [previous entry](#) listed the various immigration statuses that qualified for Marketplace coverage, the new entry is an extended discussion of the questions immigrants, regardless of status, might have about the insurance exchanges. Among the subtopics discussed are: "Lawfully present immigrants and private insurance," "Immigrant access to Medicaid and CHIP," and "Disclosure of immigration status."

Under "Disclosure of immigration status," the site goes to great lengths to explain that Marketplaces, whether federal or state, are not permitted to ask for the immigration status of family members who are *not* applying for coverage or benefits. States can't deny benefits because the applicant doesn't provide the SSNs of people who aren't applicants for benefits or recipients of Medicaid or CHIP benefits, or those not required to provide SSNs," the site explains.

After describing how government agencies, including marketplaces, use the federal "data hub" to verify application information, the site notes that "[p]eople who aren't seeking coverage for themselves won't be asked about their immigration status." If an application or the subsequent verification process does reveal problems with immigration status, the site goes on to assure applicants that "[i]nformation provided by applicants or beneficiaries won't be used for immigration enforcement purposes."

[Elsewhere](#) on the site, users are told that the "U.S. Department of Homeland Security [DHS] may verify your immigration status and/or naturalized citizenship status." But the new statement above suggests that if DHS is unable to verify legal status or the process reveals a possible violation, no action will be taken relative to immigration laws. However, any false statements on applications may be pursued by law enforcement according to the individual [privacy statement](#) on the Healthcare.gov site, which includes the following caution:

If you don't provide correct information on this form or knowingly and willfully provide false or fraudulent information, you may be subject to a penalty and other law enforcement action.

As THE WEEKLY STANDARD [reported](#) early in October, the privacy policies of the exchanges for at least some states (Maryland, for one) include statements that they "may share information provided in your application with the appropriate authorities for law enforcement and audit activities." But based on the above language at the Healthcare.gov site, possible violations of immigration laws will not trigger the "law enforcement action" threatened in other cases.

The requested video is no longer available

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