

Oregon to hold health insurance lottery

by UPI

SALEM, Ore. - The Oregon Department of Human Services is holding a lottery to choose who will be eligible to receive health insurance benefits. "Within the next few days," the department said, "a state computer will randomly select the names of 3,000 people who will be mailed applications (for health insurance) next week."

The reservation list for the state's Health Plan Standard benefit package included 91,675 names, the department said. They couldn't choose people through a discriminatory process so they chose to select the names in a lottery. After budget cuts forced the state to reduce the number receiving the benefit from 130,000 in 2004 to 18,000 in 2007, the numbers on the reservation list swelled, The Oregonian reported Tuesday. The state has received federal approval to conduct a lottery, the report said. "And these people represent only a fraction of the nearly 600,000 Oregonians without coverage," said Jim Edge, state Medicaid director in the Oregon Department of Human Services. The department estimates that 137,000 Oregonians would technically qualify for the coverage, which is meant to assist the working poor who don't qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford health insurance on their own.

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