Health Insurance Provider Sites Attract Fewer U.S. Visitors as Unemployment Increases

Searches for Health Insurance Information Post Gains vs. Year Ago

RESTON, Va., Aug 11, 2009 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- comScore, Inc. (Nasdaq: SCOR), a leader in measuring the digital world, today released a study of the online health insurance industry, which showed the effects of increasing U.S. unemployment on online consumer activity. While the number of visitors to health insurance provider sites has seen substantial declines, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of searches related to obtaining health coverage during the past year.

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20080115/COMSCORELOGO)

"With U.S. unemployment approaching 10 percent according to the most recent Department of Labor data, the millions of Americans without health care coverage or with inadequate coverage are looking online for information and assistance," said Kevin Levitt, comScore vice president. "In light of the recent health care debate in Congress, it's especially important right now to understand which Americans are being affected, how they're being affected, and where they're turning for help."

Health Insurer Sites Decline, Info Sites on the Rise

The number of visitors to major health insurance provider Web sites has declined during the past year as a result of the increase in U.S. unemployment. UnitedHealth Group saw visitation decline 29 percent during the past year to 3.2 million visitors in June. The number of visitors to Aetna Inc. (down 12 percent to 1.9 million), WellPoint, Inc. (down 11 percent to 1.6 million), and CIGNA.com (down 19 percent to 944,000) also decreased.

Visitor gains were experienced by eHealthInsurance.com (up 10 percent to 930,000 visitors), USInsuranceOnline.com (up 119 percent to 844,000 visitors) and AssurantHealth.com (up 254 percent to 253,000 visitors), each of which offer information about insurance to those who may be seeking coverage.

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    Health Insurance Sites
    June 2009 vs. June 2008
    Total U.S. - Home/Work/University Locations
    Source: comScore Media Metrix
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	Total Unique Visitors (000)		
	Jun-2008	Jun-2009	% Change
Total Internet : Total Audience	189,873	193,896	2
UnitedHealth Group	4,510	3,198	-29
Aetna Inc.	2,146	1,890	-12
WellPoint, Inc.	1,780	1,586	-11
Kaiser Permanente	1,560	1,578	1
Cigna.com	1,172	944	-19
eHealthInsurance.com	842	930	10
USInsuranceOnline.com	386	844	119
AssurantHealth.com	72	253	254

Health Insurance Searches on the Rise

The number of people searching health insurance issues has also been increasing during the past year. In June, more than 67,000 people searched for information related to COBRA coverage, the temporary coverage offered to those who have recently transitioned from their jobs, representing a 176-percent gain versus year ago. The number of people searching for affordable health insurance (up 41 percent), applying for Medicaid (up 104 percent) and health insurance quotes (up 45 percent) also increased substantially in the past year.

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    Growth in Selected Health Insurance Search Terms*
    June 2009 vs. June 2008
    Total U.S. - Home/Work/University Locations
    Source: comScore Marketer
                                      Unique Searchers
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Search Term                              Jun-08      Jun-09     % Change
COBRA                                    24,292      67,157         176%
Affordable Health Insurance              38,833      54,919          41%
Apply for Medicaid                       20,952      42,668         104%
Health Insurance Quotes                  28,253      40,834          45%


*Terms include broad matches of selected search terms and different
 derivations of included words
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"Many Americans have an urgent need for health coverage right now, and it's important for providers to be in front of consumers online where they are seeking out that information," added Levitt.

About comScore

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