



Margaret Baudinet, right, is congratulated on the birth of her quintuplets by Santa Claus, Wednesday at the St. Joseph's Nursery Intensive Care Unit in Phoenix. Looking on is Margaret's husband, Michael Baudinet. The babies were born at 32 weeks, with weights ranging from 3 to 4 pounds.

After worry, joy arrives

Quintuplets born against the odds

By JACQUES BILLEAUD
Associated Press

PHOENIX — The new mother of quintuplets kept her excitement in check for the first six months of her pregnancy — even putting off setting up a nursery.

But Margaret Baudinet could finally take a sigh of relief after a team of Phoenix doctors delivered five early Christmas presents, all wrapped in hospital blankets.

Baudinet and her husband Michael welcomed four girls and one boy on Dec. 4 at Dignity Health St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center.

The Virginia couple temporarily moved to Arizona to be closer to Dr. John Elliott, a specialist in multiple-birth pregnancies.

She said it wasn't until she was discharged from the hospital that her fear of things going wrong had lifted.

"I have a very odd relationship with hope," she said Wednesday at the hospital, where Santa Claus stopped by to see the quintuplets.

Friends and family in



Luke Baudinet, one of a set of quintuplets recently born, rests at the St. Joseph's Nursery Intensive Care Unit, Wednesday.

Virginia have prepared the nursery for Baudinet, who plans to return next month with her five healthy babies.

The children, all of whom weighed a little more than 3 pounds at birth, were delivered within 17 minutes with the help of a team of 24 medical professionals that included two anesthesiologists, three surgeons, and 15 employees from an intensive care unit.

"It takes a lot of people doing their job correctly," Elliott said.

Dr. William Chavira, who assisted in the delivery,

said things went smoothly because the team was prepared. "It was pretty much a routine cesarean section," Chavira quipped, "except that instead of one baby, it was like a clown car. They just kept coming — one, two, three, four, five."

The children, who remain in the intensive care unit, can now breathe on their own and are being bottle-fed.

"I would imagine having five newborns, I will feel a lot of feelings over the next two years or so," Baudinet said. "But I'm OK with that. That's what we wanted."

Obamacare holding its own, 6.4 million signed up so far

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — "Obamacare" seems to be holding its own. The administration said Wednesday that 6.4 million people have enrolled for subsidized private coverage through HealthCare.gov, ahead of last year's pace.

Despite rising premiums, dwindling insurers and the Republican vow to repeal President Barack Obama's health care law, about 400,000 more people signed up through Monday than for a comparable period in 2015, the Health and Human Services Department said.

"Today's enrollment numbers confirm that doomsday predictions about the marketplace are not bearing out," said HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell.

Still, it's too early for supporters of the Affordable Care Act, or ACA, to say "I told you so."

It's unclear if the administration will meet its target of 13.8 million sign-ups. That's partly because the share of new customers is down when compared with current consumers re-upping for another year.

New customers are 32 percent of the total this year versus 40 percent around the same time last year. Administration officials said they're going to focus on getting more new customers between now and the end of open enrollment Jan. 31.

Other vital signs for HealthCare.gov were encouraging.

"There are zero signs that the ACA's marketplaces are in danger of imminent collapse," said Larry Levitt of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation, who has followed the health care law from its inception.

That carries an implicit warning for President-elect Donald Trump and congressional Republicans, who have promised to move quickly to repeal the law. That repeal would be followed by a GOP-inspired



In this Oct. 19 photo, Health and Human Service (HHS) Secretary Sylvia Burwell speaks during a news conference at the HHS in Washington.

replacement. Although immediate changes affecting 2017 are unlikely, the whole process could take several years, creating uncertainty for people with coverage.

As if on cue, Democratic governors Wednesday fired off a letter to GOP congressional leaders, calling the repeal plan "nothing more than a Washington, D.C., bait-and-switch" that would leave millions uninsured and shift to states an estimated \$69 billion in uncompensated care costs over a decade.

The statistics released Wednesday are for 39 states served by the federal online insurance marketplace. Numbers from states running their own markets have not been fully tallied and will be added later, raising the total. Toward the end of this month, several million current customers who are being re-enrolled automatically will be added to the count.

Some of the biggest sign-up numbers so far are coming from states Trump won in the presidential election, including Florida (1.3 million); Texas (776,000); North Carolina (369,000); Georgia (352,000) and Pennsylvania (291,000). Vice President-elect Mike Pence's home state of Indiana had 119,000 residents enrolled.

Premiums for a midlevel benchmark plan in Health-

Care.gov states are going up an average of 25 percent next year, driven by lower-than-expected enrollment and higher medical costs. At the same time, about one-third of U.S. counties will have only one marketplace insurer next year because some major commercial carriers have left the market, and many nonprofit insurance co-ops created by the law have collapsed.

The impact of premium increases has been softened by the law's subsidies, which are designed to rise if the cost of insurance goes up.

A study last week from the nonpartisan Center for Health and Economy found that the average monthly subsidy will increase by \$76, or 26 percent, from \$291 currently to \$367 in 2017.

But that means taxpayers will fork over nearly \$10 billion more for subsidies.

And subsidies don't help all customers. Some make too much money to qualify. And an estimated 5 million to 9 million people buy individual policies outside HealthCare.gov and state markets that offer financial assistance.

Independent analyst Caroline Pearson of the consulting firm Avalere Health said the administration should be concerned about the apparent slowdown in new consumers.

BRIEFLY

Germany had monitored truck attack suspect for months

BERLIN (AP) — German officials had deemed the Tunisian man being sought in a manhunt across Europe a threat long before a truck plowed into a Christmas market in Berlin — and even kept him under covert surveillance for six months this year before halting the operation.

Now the international manhunt for Anis Amri — considered the prime suspect in Monday's deadly rampage — is raising questions about how closely German authorities are monitoring the hundreds of known Islamic extremists in the country.

The issue puts new pressure on Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is running for re-election next year. Critics are lambasting her for allowing hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers to enter the country, allegedly without proper security checks.

Among them was Amri, a convicted criminal in both Tunisia and Italy with little chance of getting asylum who successfully evaded deportation from Germany even as German authorities rejected his asylum application and deemed the 24-year-old a possible jihadi threat.

He is suspected in the attack that left 12 people dead and 48 injured Monday evening in Berlin. Health officials said 12 of the injured had very serious wounds.

In bitter divide, repeal of N. Carolina LGBT law fails

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Amid deepening acrimony, a supposedly bipartisan deal to kill the North Carolina law known as the "bathroom bill" fell apart Wednesday night, ensuring the likelihood that global corporations and national sports events will continue to stay away from the state.

The law limits protections for LGBT people and was best known for a provision that requires transgender people to use public restrooms corresponding to the gender on their birth certificates. It was passed earlier this year after Charlotte officials approved a sweeping anti-discrimination ordinance.

The repeal compromise touted by both Democratic Gov.-elect Roy Cooper and GOP Gov. Pat McCrory called for Charlotte to do away with its ordinance. In exchange, lawmakers would undo the LGBT law.

But both sides balked: GOP lawmakers cried foul when Charlotte leaders initially left part of the city's ordinance in place. And when the Senate bill called for a months-long ban on cities passing similar ordinances, Democrats said Republicans were going back on their promise. Cooper said the moratorium essentially doubled down on discrimination.

Researchers: Nearly 400 drug addicts helped in police effort

BOSTON (AP) — A novel drug addiction program developed in a small Massachusetts fishing town and since replicated in dozens of cities nationwide was able to place almost 400 addicts into treatment nearly each time they sought it during the first year of operation, researchers say in a report being published Thursday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The team from the Boston Medical Center and Boston University's School of Public Health say 376 addicts sought assistance 429 times from the Gloucester Police Department's Angel program from June 2015 to May 2016. They received the help they needed nearly 95 percent of the time, researchers say.

Davida Schiff, a Boston Medical Center doctor and lead author of the report, said that rate is far higher than the 50 to 60 percent for similar, hospital-based initiatives.

Part of the reason, she said, is that Gloucester's addicts were voluntarily coming to police seeking help. "They were motivated individuals that came to the station ready to engage in care," Schiff said.

Before Trump's presidency, U.S. privacy board in disarray

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal board responsible for protecting Americans against abuses by spy agencies is in disarray just weeks before President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

The five-member Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board will have only two remaining members as of Jan. 7 — and zero Democrats even though it is required to operate as an independent, bipartisan agency. The vacancies mean it will lack the minimum three members required to conduct business and can work only on ongoing projects. Trump would have to nominate new members, who would have to be confirmed by the Senate.

The board was revitalized after former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden's disclosures on the scope of U.S. spying in 2013. It notably concluded that the NSA's phone surveillance program was illegal.

Since then, it has been crucial in ensuring members of Congress and the public have a window into the highly secretive and classified world of intelligence agencies. But it's unclear if Trump will support robust intelligence oversight. During his campaign, Trump appeared to support strengthened intelligence overall and surveillance of mosques, but he's more recently expressed distrust of intelligence agencies.

21st Annual Christmas Spirit Award Presentations

The Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation is pleased to announce Cathy Putnam and Virginia Miller as the 2016 Christmas Spirit Award Winners.



The Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation is pleased to honor CATHY PUTNAM as a recipient of the 21st Annual Christmas Spirit Award.

This award is given to one who exemplifies the spirit of Christmas by giving of themselves to others all throughout the year.

Cathy is the owner of Carlson Drug in Umatilla and is a prodigious supporter of many community activities. Her caring attitude is evidenced by the many times she has delivered medication to residents after a long day's work. She has been known to open the pharmacy on many occasions after hours just to provide medication and expertise to many who are in need.

She uses her considerable talents and abilities to help young people develop leadership skills and donates to many worthwhile community youth projects. She instructs students on the value of being community-minded and shares life experiences that help build and enhance their lives.

Cathy's importance to the Eastern Oregon Mission and its two outreaches, Agape House and Martha's House, is priceless beyond monetary value. She serves as a member of the board of directors and has been a past president, guiding these outreach organizations to greater levels of success. Her leadership and support is a major reason this organization continues to serve those in need within our local communities.

Cathy may be found many mornings, prior to her work schedule, visiting the residents of Sun Terrace. Many just want to talk and have someone to listen. She is an exceptional listener and cheerfully interacts with the residents to make them feel comfortable.

It is for these reasons that the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation, which strives to make our community a better place to live, has selected Cathy Putnam as a 2016 Christmas Spirit Award recipient.

The Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation is pleased to honor VIRGINIA MILLER as a recipient of the 21st Annual Christmas Spirit Award.

This award is given to one who exemplifies the spirit of Christmas by giving of themselves to others all throughout the year.

Virginia is a beacon of generosity and blesses our community with her example of service and long term dedication to the growth and prosperity of the Hermiston and surrounding areas.

She has volunteered with integrity and extensive service on projects with Altrusa International of Hermiston, the Board of Realtors, and the Umatilla County Department of Land Use Planning.

Most recently, Virginia is a dedicated meal preparer at the Open Table for First United Methodist Church. She shops for, plans, and serves hot meals 2-3 times per month for Hermiston's most needy individuals.

Virginia is always the first to volunteer and assist in any way to improve the lives of those around her. Her benevolence, caring attitude, and enthusiasm for life is infectious to those around her with hope and a desire to move forward.

She has blessed our community with many years of service and is held in high regard by those with whom she comes in contact. She participated in the Ford leadership program and was an active participant in the repurposing and repair of the Umatilla Community Center.

It is for these reasons that the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation, which strives to make our community a better place to live, has selected Virginia Miller as a 2016 Christmas Spirit Award recipient.

The Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation is proud to recognize Cathy Putnam and Virginia Miller as the 2016 Christmas Spirit Award winners.

The Foundation mission is to enhance the quality of life and general health of residents living in West Umatilla and Morrow County communities by raising funds and giving to community projects. Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation reviews funding requests and makes awards for worthwhile projects twice a year. The next deadline for submitting grant applications to the Foundation is January 31, 2017.

Groups or individuals interested in making a donation or being considered for funding are encouraged to call the Foundation office at 667-3419.

Best Wishes For A Happy Holiday Season.



GOOD SHEPHERD
COMMUNITY HEALTH
FOUNDATION