The Obama administration is sliding the deadline for individuals to be required to buy health insurance by as much as six weeks. Former Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt warned about potential Obamacare glitches in July 2013, after having been part of the George W. Bush White House’s technical setbacks during the Medicare Part D roll out in 2006.

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**APA**


**CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE**


**Transcript**

White House to Delay Health Insurance Penalty Deadline

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:

Good evening. And we are starting here tonight with some breaking news out of Washington. Details of this are still coming in to us. We want to begin with NBC’s Tom Costello who’s been covering all of this since day one. He’s in our DC newsroom tonight. Tom, good evening.

TOM COSTELLO, reporting:

Hi Brian. The White House tells NBC News it plans to move the penalty deadline for individuals to be required to buy health insurance by as much as six weeks. As the law stands right now, to avoid a tax penalty, the uninsured need to start the process, started by February 15th. With this change, the administration is trying to allow people to buy insurance all the way up to March 31st to avoid that penalty. Meanwhile, the work to fix the website is a top priority. Twenty-three days into a very rocky rollout for the Affordable Care Act, CEOs from the country’s top insurance companies were today troubleshooting at the White House as the website problems persist.

WOMAN: Start filling out the application through paper and pen, if anything.

COSTELLO: Today we returned to a Miami clinic where 1,000 people have tried to enroll. So far only five applications have gone through.

JASON CONNER (Borinquen Medical Center): We’re going to try again to get them through the system. If that’s still not working, we’re going to have them either fill out a paper application or apply over the phone.

COSTELLO: On CNN last night, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius dodged the question about whether she might resign.

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS (file): I think my job is to get this fully implemented and to get the website working right. And that’s really what I’m focused on.

COSTELLO: In July, former HHS secretary Mike Leavitt met with the administration and wrote an
editorial urging the White House to "learn from our mistakes." The Bush White House also ran into technical glitches when rolling out Medicare Part D in 2006, seniors not able to get their prescriptions.

MIKE LEAVITT: We were a bit unprepared for the imperfections.

COSTELLO: Leavitt says he doesn’t like Obamacare but now says too many people would be hurt if it doesn’t work.

LEAVITT: I think they have about a month to get it fixed. If they get it fixed, people will move on. If they don’t, it will-- it will characterize and brand forever Obamacare.

COSTELLO: Meanwhile in some states customers that are getting through are experiencing sticker shock.

JOAN BUDDEN (Priority Health Chief Marketing Officer): They thought that this is going to be less expensive than what was available today. And in Michigan, for example, we are about 40% on average higher than already the low cost plans that we had in the market already.

COSTELLO: Tomorrow, congressional hearings into what’s gone wrong with the website. NBC News has learned that the lead federal contractor CGI will testify that the website passed eight technical reviews prior to going live on October 1st, but also that a late government decision to require customers to register their personal information before they could check insurance prices, contributed to the glitches that have still got the websites all tied up. But again, Brian, the White House intends to move the February 15th penalty deadline for individuals to be required to buy health insurance. Before, if you hadn’t signed up by February 15th, there would likely be a penalty. Now, they want to make sure that anyone who signs up by the enrollment deadline of March 31st doesn’t face a penalty.

WILLIAMS: Tom, thanks.