

OBAMA'S "AFFORDABLE CARE ACT" IS NOT AFFORDABLE

The "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act" was passed in 2010 at a time when the economic stability of the country and its ability to compete in world markets was and continues to be hindered by the amount spent on health care. Passed under the Obama administration, it has been popularly named "ObamaCare."

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that this country spends 20% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on health care, and expects it to rise to 31% by 2035. Nations, with which we compete in the world, spend less than half that amount of GDP on health care, and Singapore spends one-fifth of the amount per capita than the U.S.

The stated goal of ObamaCare is to "improve access to quality affordable health care and to control costs," according to the chairman of the principal senate committee that considered the ObamaCare proposal.

Here are a few of the elements of the "Affordable" Care Act that should convince the majority of Americans that it is an unaffordable alternative:

1. ObamaCare increases the number of people covered by health insurance largely by mandating that all Americans enroll in a health insurance plan (except for a favored few). Of the 30 million currently without insurance, nearly 11 million of them would be added to the federally financed Medicaid system (called MediCal in California), adding significantly to the cost the government pays for health care.

2. ObamaCare proposes to increase the amount of income that will qualify an individual for the Medicaid (MediCal) system, increasing significantly the further cost government pays for health care.

3. ObamaCare increases Medicare benefits to cover some preventive care and to close the "donut hole" on prescription drug coverage. This further increases government costs, but there is no offsetting proposal to increase Medicare's income, which is already \$50 billion less than its yearly expenses.

4. ObamaCare increases government costs by increasing the required package for government mandated "essential benefits" in private insurance.

5. ObamaCare intends government to subsidize persons and give tax breaks to those with low incomes who purchase coverage.

6. ObamaCare prohibits the denial of coverage for pre-existing conditions (underwriting), further increasing government cost.

For purposes of unbiased reporting, we should add that there are certain aspects of the ObamaCare program that introduce laudable pilot programs. Regrettably, their funding adds unsustainable expenses. Examples are programs to assess quality of various plans and institutions, and risk assessment programs which may compensate for the abolishment of underwriting.

From every perspective, expanding “essential benefits” increases costs to the government and especially to middle-income individuals who are not subsidized by the government. Control of cost in ObamaCare seems to be far outweighed by the spending increases built into it.

There are some minimal efforts in the ObamaCare program intended to control costs. The stated intent is to promote competition by encouraging the promotion of more HMO’s (or HMO-like organizations) which, if effectively carried out, could help to control costs. The vigorous pursuit of efforts to uncover misuses, which are necessary to deter fraud and abuse, are, however, lacking. In other words, the cost saving proposals of ObamaCare will in no way compensate for the cost increases written into the program.

The name “Affordable Care Act” is a misnomer. Nothing is affordable about ObamaCare.

It is undeniable that ObamaCare may increase availability of health insurance and increase benefit packages, but it will certainly increase costs and intensify the nation’s fiscal problems. Nothing in this program provides the revenue to absorb the additional financial burden on government spending.

Fixing the many problems of ObamaCare is not an option. It should be repealed. Repeal, however, won’t solve the spiraling costs and uneven delivery which characterize our health care system in this country.

We must develop a plan that controls costs, but provides Americans the opportunity to have affordable health care. America should be up to the challenge. Our nation has faced and overcome huge problems in the past. There is no reason why we cannot do the same now.

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