

Obamacare's Death Throes: Unaffordable Healthcare, Enriches the Insurance Companies

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On March 23, 2010, Obama signed the misnamed Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) into law.

It's a healthcare rationing scheme to enrich insurers, drug companies and large hospital chains in lieu of the only equitable system - universal coverage, everyone in, no one left out, no gimmicks and schemes the way Obamacare was crafted.

Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) proposes a "Beyond the Affordable Care Act: A Physicians' Proposal for Single-Payer Care Reform."

It's a work in progress, to be published when completed. An abstract said the following:

Even after full implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), tens of millions of Americans will remain uninsured or only partially insured, and costs will continue to rise faster than the background inflation rate.

We propose to replace the ACA with a publicly financed National Health Program (NHP) that would fully cover medical care for all Americans, while lowering costs by eliminating the profit-driven private insurance industry with its massive overhead.

Hospitals, nursing homes, and other provider facilities would be nonprofit, and paid global operating budgets rather than fees for each service.

Physicians could opt to be paid on a fee-for-service basis, but with fees adjusted to better reward primary care providers, or by salaries in facilities paid by global budgets.

The initial increase in government costs would be offset by savings in premiums and out-of-pocket costs, and the rate of medical inflation would slow, freeing up resources for unmet medical and public health needs.

Obamacare was a failed experiment. Sharply increasing costs make it unaffordable for millions, leaving them woefully underinsured or for many without coverage because it's too expensive to buy.

It costs double or more what consumers in other developed countries pay. Young healthy Americans aren't enrolling in state insurance exchanges in enough numbers to keep many of them viable. Signups are less than half of forecasted numbers. For everyone joining, two others aren't.

Insurers in some areas are abandoning Obamacare, others hemorrhaging cash because of rising costs, low exchange enrollments (especially among valued young healthy adults), and failing Obamacare co-ops.

Choice is disappearing. In many parts of the country, Obamacare enrollees and new customers have one provider, not several among which to choose what's best for them at the lowest cost.

Obamacare was designed for profit-making, not putting patient needs first. Replacing it with universal coverage is vitally needed – excluding middlemen insurers increasing costs while providing no care.

That's not what Trump and congressional Republicans have in mind. It's unclear what they intend other than ideas Trump proposed nearly a year ago.

An earlier article discussed his seven-point industry-enriching plan, an edited version below.

1. Replacing Obamacare with greater predatory marketplace medicine than already.

He's right, saying no one should be forced to buy insurance they don't want – one of Obamacare's many deplorable features.

2. He's unaware of existing law, saying he'll change things to let insurers sell policies nationwide – already legally allowed.

Claiming “insurance costs will go down and consumer satisfaction will go up” under his plan is nonsense. Insurers are in business to make money, maximizing premiums, minimizing payouts.

3. He'll let individuals deduct insurance premiums from their tax returns. Under single-payer universal coverage, predatory insurers providing no healthcare are eliminated altogether, rendering his deduction scheme irrelevant.

If implemented, it would help high income households, not others earning too little to benefit from tax schemes.

It's unclear how he'll handle Medicaid, saying he'll “review basic options...and work with states” with little elaboration on how.

4. He endorses so-called Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), a boon to employers, not workers, shifting the cost of healthcare entirely to them.

Insurers and financial services predators stand to benefit most, reaping huge profits from managing funds in HSAs.

Trump claiming these plans “should be particularly attractive to young (healthy) people ignores their later in life needs when they won't have enough coverage to handle extraordinarily expensive treatments for serious health issues.

5. It's unclear what Trump means by requiring price transparency from all healthcare providers, especially doctors, hospitals and HMOs. Small print disclaimers and other deceptions are longstanding practices in all industries.

Saying “(i)ndividuals should be able to shop to find the best prices for procedures, exams or any other medical-related procedures” is pure deception. Healthcare isn’t like buying a car or other consumer products. With universal coverage, shopping wouldn’t be necessary.

6. Trump favors shifting the Medicaid burden entirely to states “to preserve our precious resources,” a scheme to eliminate this vital service altogether eventually.

7. He supports the right of consumers to freely buy “imported, safe and dependable drugs.”

Opposing mandatory insurance coverage and having access to cheaper imported drugs are the only redeeming features of what he earlier proposed.

His plan won’t lower escalating healthcare costs or assure all Americans have access to the most fundamental of human rights, along with food, shelter and clothing.

Replacing Obamacare with another corporate friendly scheme assures perpetuating the problem, not fixing it.

On January 12, the Republican controlled Senate passed a nonbinding resolution by a 51 - 48 majority to repeal and replace Obamacare, “providing the legislative tools necessary (and) move ahead with” new legislation, according to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R. KY).

Repeal legislation will likely follow in weeks, replacement provisions voted on and enacted into law, once majority agreement is reached.

The Republican controlled House will likely follow suit. Obamacare’s demise looks certain. What replaces it won’t be consumer friendly.

What industry giants want, they’ll get. Ordinary people have no say whatever.

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