



The Affordable Care Act: A Vision Confirmed

How do we create a health care system that: (1) includes everyone, (2) improves everyone's health, and (3) brings escalating costs under control?

In March 2010 Congress passed and the President signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). This 2,000 page law was carefully crafted to answer the above questions.

It passed because the American people realized that our health care system was broken. Millions could no longer afford insurance. Employers were cutting back on benefits. Self-employed persons faced sky-high premiums. Big business was losing its competitive advantage globally. Escalating health costs threatened to bankrupt the nation. We had little choice but to act. Now, after more than three years getting started, the law is beginning to do its job. **It is revolutionizing our health care.**

Universal Coverage: Based on our deepest value, the sanctity of life, the ACA affirms that every American has an inherent right to health care. It presents a comprehensive plan that leads to universal coverage. Thirty two million of us, the population of Canada, finally are starting to get access to health care. The major obstacle in the path to universal coverage is Republicans blocking Medicaid expansion.

Improved Health Outcomes: Now for the first time health providers are accountable for results, published on the internet. Universally computerized records result in fewer mistakes. The ACA rewards wellness programs and emphasizes research. New delivery systems fill in treatment gaps. For the first time, women get treatment that meets their needs as much as do men.

Cost Control: Until the ACA, providers imposed on the sick whatever cost they felt the market would bear. The charges by these providers are now being questioned, analyzed and challenged. The law also challenges the over-utilization of drugs, operations and procedures that cost billions of dollars without improving our health. The CBO confirms that Medicare will save \$575 billion over ten years.

By 2014 four million young adults had obtained insurance on their parents' policies. Seniors saved \$7 billion or \$1,000 per person on prescription drugs. 10,000 persons each month averted financial ruin because their insurance policies could no longer be cancelled after devastating illnesses.

January 1, 2014 was the crucial date when many parts of the ACA plan went into effect. Despite initial website problems, state health exchanges now serve as marketplaces. Insurance companies offer their policies with transparency, competitive prices and quality controls. Now every insurance policy offers checkups, inoculations, family planning and other services.

- 9 million new enrollees are now getting health care.
- 78% of new enrollees, both Democrats and Republicans, are satisfied with their policies.
- Health care spending in the U.S. has the lowest growth rate in 53 year of keeping records.

America now has a working plan to manage our health care. It is called the Affordable Care Act.