

## The New Health Care Straw Man

By Richard E. Ralston

Every day for the last few weeks, we have heard the drum beat of panicky defenders of Obamacare as they pound Congress for not having passed legislation to replace the health care law as soon as they assembled and gaveled Congress into session. This is accompanied by relentless criticism of what they claim is in the replacement legislation.

Are they really upset by the lack of an immediate replacement, or do they dread any replacement?

Eight years after passage of Obamacare, no member of Congress has read it, let alone all of the regulations resulting from it. No one can read that huge waste of paper. No one can even lift it.

Why are they so disturbed by the alleged specifics of newly proposed legislation?

There is an obvious explanation. The display put on by these Obamacare holder-owners is part of a straw man built on legislative provisions that do not, and never will, exist.

They can then blame imaginary legislation for eliminating coverage of pre-existing conditions, despite the fact that President Trump and congressional leadership support continuing coverage. And they can claim that any replacement would leave 20 million or more participants in Obamacare exchanges without any coverage, despite the fact that no one is advocating that.

These warnings are from the same politicians who promised all Americans, when they praised Obamacare legislation, that “if you like your current insurance, you can keep it.” Millions lost their insurance over the next few years, because the policies that they liked did not comply with numerous new rules and mandates. More millions were thrown out of their insurance when government exchanges failed, or when insurance company’s losses

forced them to pull out of the market, and when insurance cooperatives, heavily subsidized by taxpayers, went bankrupt. New taxes on medical equipment manufacturers foreclosed on the development of new devices, reduced American jobs and gave the advantage to foreign competitors.

None of that is the overactive imagination of politicians spreading fears about a new replacement for Obamacare. It is the history of Obamacare.

Although reform and replacement legislation is urgently needed, we should watch the process closely. The more urgently reform is required, the greater the danger that members of Congress will slip in provisions to serve their political interests. We cannot afford to pass legislation again “so that you can find out what's in it.”

We can and should be vigilant in examining whatever reform legislation emerges from Congress. We need to ask whether or not it eliminates thousands of pages of regulations. We need to ask whether it tosses out mandates or creates more. We need to ask whether it adds fees and taxes on medical insurance or cuts them. We must determine whether our physicians will be free to provide what they consider to be the best care, or whether they will spend their time appeasing a government bureaucracy that forces them to perform unnecessary tests and figure out which of 160,000 medical codes to use on paperwork.

We must demand that Congress give us more choices in health care, not fewer. We must demand that they abolish the bureaucratic, wasteful monstrosity of Obamacare now hanging over our heads. We must demand that Congress take the requisite time to pass legislation and get it right.

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