

The Affordable Health Care Act: Bureaucratic Dementia¹

Thomas R. Cuba

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Last week I was assigned the responsibility of writing an article which would explain just exactly what the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare) would mean to seniors.

I really wanted to do a good job with this story but was a little leery of what I had heard so far. The scary stories just seemed too far-fetched. Still, many people had told me that the AHCA would result in a laundry list of problems for the elderly. I was told that we would not be able to keep our doctor because the person we have been seeing for our care for perhaps decades, may not be in the new network. I was told that prescription prices would skyrocket. Our copay was going up and our premiums would be going up. The newspapers are full of stories about people who have had their premiums double. There are stories about how people are being forced to give up insurance and go to medicare or medicaid. Perhaps the worst stories are the ones where the bureaucrats, not the doctors, decide if we get a new hip or bypass surgery. And then there are the ones about how long it will take to get an appointment to see a doctor at all.

I started doing my homework researching these things and found many well done articles about this topic from several well respected sources. I've never really put much faith in blogs and independent news sources. I hope the fact that I write for one should be ignored at least until we get to the end of the article. What was hard to decipher was the fact that these articles and reports were either singing the praises of the AHCA or were demanding a full repeal because of the heinous repercussions of socialized medicine. I didn't know what to think or what to write.

Finally, I learned a few things about the implementation. Everyone already knows the famous statement by a US Congresswoman that we needed to "pass the law in order to find out what's in it." Well, she may have been more accurate than anyone had suspected. Since it was passed, there have been tens of thousands of new regulations passed by the Department of Health and Human Services and Mr. Obama has issued almost thirty executive orders changing both dates and requirements within the law

¹ This article was originally written for Patriots Ink, inc. when I was a staff writer for their newsletter/blog.

itself. I suspect that each of these probably resulted in a revision to the regulations, but the truth is that there is no way to tell.

As I writhed in the agony of my failure I realized that it is really hard to write an article on something that changes so whimsically. Then I came across a page describing the benefits of the AHCA to seniors with dementia. I realized that the definition applied just as well to the AHCA as it does to those afflicted with the more clinical version. EverydayHealth.com defines dementia as “a loss of mental skills that affects your daily life. It can cause problems with your memory and how well you can think and plan. Usually dementia gets worse over time.”

So my report ends with the conclusion that we are suffering from Bureaucratic Dementia, for our government seems to have lost the skills needed to think and plan effectively and it seems to be getting worse with time. I can't explain how the AHCA will affect you. But I can agree with Nancy Pelosi. We might just have to wait and see.