

The Trump Health Care Plan

By Ron Howrigan

I just read the 40-page executive order signed by President Trump, outlining his “vision” for health care. In case you’re wondering, 35 of the 40 pages are comprised of lists of all the incredible things Trump has already done. It’s impressive how much of our health care problems he has already fixed! Just so you know, here are some of the incredible things Trump has accomplished:

1. Produced temporary plans that are 60% cheaper, saving 500,000 people from being uninsured
2. Improved HSAs for 11 million employees, saving another 800,000 people from being uninsured
3. Created association plans, covering another 400,000 individuals
4. Lowered health care premiums in Wisconsin by 11%, Minnesota by 20%, and Maryland by 43%
5. Saved seniors \$2.65 billion in lower Medicare premiums.

The list goes on and on. This was all done despite being strapped with a terrible law (The ACA). But the job is not done. So, in the last five pages, the executive order lays out the President's vision for the future.

Hold your breath; it's a good one.

1. Giving American's more choice: “The Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Labor, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall maintain and build upon existing actions and expand access to and options for affordable healthcare.” Seriously, that’s what it says. That’s it. It’s a long way of saying, “There will be more access because I say there will be more access!”

2. Lowering Healthcare Costs for Americans: (a) “...shall maintain and build upon existing actions to expand access to affordable medicines.” (b) “... shall maintain and build upon existing actions to ensure consumers have access to meaningful prices and quality information prior to the delivery of care...work with Congress to reach a legislative solution (to surprise billing) by December 31, 2020. If a legislative solution is not reached by 12/31/2020, the Secretary of HHS shall take administrative action to prevent (surprise billing).” Note: This one is my favorite. You see, we only get the solution if Trump wins the election. (c) “...shall maintain and build upon the existing actions to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the health care system.”

3. Provide Better Care to Americans: (a) “...shall maintain and build upon existing actions to improve the quality in delivery of care for veterans.” (b) “...shall continue to promote medical innovations to find novel and improved treatments for Covid19, Alzheimer's disease, sickle cell disease, pediatric cancer, and other conditions threatening the well-being of Americans.”

That’s it, friends. That’s his vision for the future of health care. In summary, Trump will give us more choice, lower costs, improved care, and cure all the diseases we face right now. Amazing!

This, to me, is a little like a football coach talking to his team before a big game and saying, “What we need to do is win on defense, win on offense and win on special teams. The key will be to score points while keeping the other team from scoring points. Now go out there and win!”

Oh, you know what wasn't in the "actions" part of the executive order? How Trump plans to deal with pre-existing conditions if the ACA is ruled unconstitutional. There is only one line addressing that in the last five pages of his plan. "It has been, and will continue to be, the policy of the United States to give Americans seeking healthcare more choice, lower costs, and better care, and to ensure that Americans with pre-existing conditions can obtain the insurance of their choice at affordable rates."

Whew, well as long as that's our "policy," we are all going to be ok. That was a close one.

Do you know what else wasn't anywhere in the order? His promise to send seniors a \$200 prescription drug coupon didn't make the final draft of the order he signed. Maybe it's because there are some serious questions about his ability to spend 7 billion dollars without congressional approval. The administration says the money comes from savings that will be achieved from his "most favored nations" drug pricing proposal (which was also not outlined in the order). That's right, the President plans on spending 7 billion dollars to give \$200 to seniors right before the election, and he plans on paying for it from savings achieved by a program that doesn't exist. Does anyone other than myself see the problem with this? Anyone?

So, there it is—the President's "vision" on how to fix health care. I don't know about you, but I will sleep better tonight knowing we have that problem solved. Good night moon.