

Statement on the Fifth Anniversary of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

March 22, 2015

On the 5-year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, one thing couldn't be clearer: This law is working, and in many ways, it's working even better than anticipated.

After 5 years of the Affordable Care Act, more than 16 million uninsured Americans have gained the security of health insurance, an achievement that has cut the ranks of the uninsured by nearly one-third. These aren't just numbers. Because of this law, there are parents who can finally afford to take their kids to the doctor. There are families who no longer risk losing their home or savings just because someone gets sick. There are young people free to pursue their dreams and start their own business without worrying about losing access to health care. There are Americans who, without this law, would not be alive today.

For Americans who already had insurance before this law was passed, the Affordable Care Act has meant new savings and new protections. Today, tens of millions of Americans with preexisting conditions are no longer at risk of being denied coverage. Women no longer have to worry about being charged more just for being women. Millions of young people have been able to stay on their parents' plan until they turn 26. More than 9 million seniors and people with disabilities have saved an average of \$1,600 per person on their prescription medicine, over \$15 billion in all since the Affordable Care Act became law. More than 70 million Americans have gained access to preventive care, including contraceptive services, with no additional out-of-pocket costs. And the law has helped improve the quality of health care: It's a major reason we saw 50,000 fewer preventable patient deaths in hospitals over the last 3 years of data.

The cynics said this law would kill jobs and cripple our economy. Despite the fact that our businesses have created nearly 12 million new jobs since this law was passed, some still insist it's a threat. But a growing body of evidence—actual facts—shows that the Affordable Care Act is good for our economy. In stark contrast to predictions that this law would cause premiums to skyrocket, last year, the growth in health care premium costs for businesses matched its lowest level on record. If premiums had kept growing over the last 4 years at the rate they had in the last decade, the average family premium would be \$1,800 higher than it is today. That's \$1,800 that stays in your pocket or doesn't come out of your paycheck. And in part because health care prices have grown at their slowest rate in nearly 50 years since this law was passed, we've been able to cut our deficits by two-thirds. Health care costs that have long been the biggest factor driving our projected long-term up deficits up are now the single biggest factor driving those deficits down.

The Affordable Care Act has been the subject of more scrutiny, more rumor, more attempts to dismantle and undermine it than just about any law in recent history. But 5 years later, it is succeeding. In fact, it's working better than even many of its supporters expected. It's time to embrace reality. Instead of trying yet again to repeal the Affordable Care Act and allowing special interests to write their own rules, we should work together to keep improving our health care system for everybody. Instead of kicking millions off their insurance and doubling the number of uninsured Americans, as the House Republican budget would do, we should work together to make sure every American has a chance to get covered.

Five years ago, we declared that in America, quality, affordable health care is not a privilege, it is a right. And I'll never stop working to protect that right for those who already have it and extend it to those who don't so that all of us can experience the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in this country we love.

Categories: Statements by the President : Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, fifth anniversary.

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