

Opening Statement of the Honorable Joe Pitts
Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on “Obamacare Implementation Problems: More than Just a Broken Website”
November 14, 2013

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Since the disastrous rollout of HealthCare.gov on October 1, Americans have learned even more about the Affordable Care Act.

They have learned that if you like your plan, there is a good chance you have or will lose it. Premiums and deductibles are going up, not down, as a result of Obamacare.

Millions have already received cancellation notices for their current insurance policies, and many more will receive similar letters before the end of this year.

The administration keeps telling these people that they will get better, more comprehensive care in an exchange plan. What they don't point out is that premiums in the individual market are going up approximately 40 percent nationwide. Numerous people have contacted my office to share that their premiums and deductibles have gone up, some even more than doubling.

Americans have also learned that if you like your doctor, you may not be able to continue seeing him or her. In an effort to keep premiums down in the face of the law's countless mandates, many exchange plans have narrowed the number of in-network providers, so your doctor or hospital may no longer participate in your insurance plan. Analyses show that more than half of hospitals have still not signed any exchange contracts.

Americans are now learning that when the HealthCare.gov website does work, the personal information they enter may not be secure. A September 3rd internal CMS memo even said that, “the threat and risk potential (to the system) is limitless.”

It is clear that rather than give Americans the peace of mind that comes with good health coverage, the law is making life worse for Americans across the country.

Finally, of the people who were able to successfully use healthcare.gov, many of them ended up enrolling in Medicaid. The program already has serious access problems, as many providers refuse to take Medicaid patients. Studies show that the care Medicaid patients receive is often substandard. An influx of newly eligible patients will further strain the system.

Obamacare's problems are not limited to a website. This law was sold to the American people with false promises, and real people are being hurt.

Despite the clear evidence, many supporters of the law still condescendingly assert that Americans are too uninformed to realize the benefits of the Affordable Care Act. Perhaps it is time for supporters of the law to look at the front page of any newspaper and face reality: this law is hurting, not helping Americans.

While it may have been convenient to tell Americans that they can keep their health care plan under the Affordable Care Act, it is time for my Democrat colleagues to put away that broken promise once and for all. Our constituents deserve better.

Tomorrow, the House will have a chance to partially remedy one of the false promises of Obamacare by voting on H.R. 3350, the Keep Your Health Plan Act of 2013. And I hope all of my colleagues will support this commonsense bill.

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