

## ***Obamacare by Januario Azarcon, Esq.***

Pres. Barack Obama is on a mission to deliver free health insurance to the uninsured in the name of health care reform. What is in it for you? If you are happy with your health insurance plan, does it matter to you? Can the government afford another budget busting expenditure while the solvency of Medicare and Social Security are heading to uncertainty?

In a special TV interview broadcast by ABC news, the President said that *"if you like your plan and you like your doctor, you won't have to do a thing. You keep your plan; you keep your doctor. If your employer's providing you good health insurance, terrific. We're not going to mess with it."*

ABC's Jake Tapper however challenged Obama on his assertion by pointing out that if the federal government offers employers an option to provide health insurance to their employees at less cost, a big number of employees will just pay into the government system and end the employer-sponsored health plan. While the government will not force employers to make the switch, economic realities will push them to save cost. So, if your employer is providing you good health insurance, don't bet that it will be around for long if Obama will have his wish.

According to health care expert Michael D. Tanner of the Cato Institute, Obama's plan would not initially create a government-run, single-payer system such as Canada or Britain. Private insurance would still exist, at least for a time but would be reduced to little more than a public utility, with the government regulating and controlling every aspect of its operation.

A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) study estimates that at least 23 million people will lose the health insurance they currently have as a result of the plan. The actuarial firm Lewin Associates projects approximately 118.5 million people would

Pres. Obama tells us that a government-run health care plan can control costs better than the current market-based system. Karl Rove, former political advisor to Pres. George W. Bush dismisses this claim by pointing to the Medicare experience. He cites a study published by the Pacific Research Institute finding that since 1970 Medicare costs have increased 34% more a year compared with the rest of health care plans.

Who is going to pay for Obama's health care spending spree? David S. Hilzenrath of the Washington Post writes that "President Obama's plan to rein in federal spending on health care could end up shifting costs to the private sector, economists say. Unless doctors and hospitals are able to respond to the government cuts by becoming more efficient, the result could be higher costs for insurers, employers, and people with private medical coverage, they say."

House Democrats are already floating potential targets for higher taxes to pay for Obamacare. According to the Associated Press, House Democrats are considering higher alcohol taxes, Medicare payroll tax, a value-added tax equivalent to a national sales tax, soda tax, increase in the

shift from private plans to government coverage. This translates to a 60% reduction in the number of Americans covered by private health insurance plans.

So what if you are bumped by your employer from a private plan to the Obama plan? The CBO puts a tag price on the Obama plan floated in the Senate by Sen. Ted Kennedy at least \$1 trillion over the next ten years. Committee staffers of Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus priced Obama's plan at \$1.6 trillion.

The CBO Director says that Obama's plan to expand health coverage to the uninsured is likely to dig the nation deeper into debt. "Without meaningful reforms, the substantial costs of many current proposals would be much more likely to worsen the long-run budget outlook than to improve it."

Dr. Scott Gottlieb of the American Enterprise Institute says that the government will try cost control measures like promoting preventive care or the adoption of electronic health records. The CBO however doubts the effectiveness of these prescriptions. The government will then use the policy scalpel to regulate access to drugs and medical services. According to Gottlieb, rationing is inevitable if we simply expand government control without fixing the way health care is reimbursed so that doctors and patients become sensitive to issues of price and quality. He cites France and Germany, where government plays a large role in health care resulting in rationing of medical services.

Will Obamacare lead to rationing of health care in America? Gottlieb recalls the testimony of Mr. Obama's budget director Peter Orszag before a congressional committee when he was still head of the CBO whereby he acknowledged that rationing reduces costs, saying that spending can be moderated if diffusion of existing costly services were slowed. individual income tax for those earning more than \$200,000 a year and a new employer payroll tax.

The bottom line is that the cost of Obama's health care spending spree will come out of our pockets. Thinking that even your grandchildren will still bear the burden of paying for Obama's profligacy is enough to make you sick.

No thanks, Dr. Obama.

