



ObamaCare Intensifying Doctor Shortage Crisis as Medicaid Balloons

With the ObamaCare-instigated expansion of Medicaid expected to add almost 10 million more Americans to the government entitlement scheme, the shortage of doctors across the United States is set to get much worse, according to experts and estimates cited in news reports. While analysts have been predicting the looming crisis for years, as the extent of the damage becomes clearer and the escalating shortages accelerate, even reliably pro-ObamaCare media outlets such as the [New York Times](#) are now highlighting the disaster. Talk of radical so-called “solutions” has already started, too.



Under ObamaCare, passed by congressional Democrats under pressure from Obama despite overwhelming public opposition, state governments were prodded into expanding the Medicaid system using mostly taxpayer-funded handouts from the federal government. The controversial federal-state healthcare program aimed at low-income Americans, however, was already in shambles — [exploding costs](#), [rampant fraud](#), and growing numbers of doctors refusing to participate owing to low reimbursement rates and jungles of red tape to navigate.

Official estimates suggest almost 10 million new Medicaid patients will be signing up in just the next year — and so far, government estimates have largely been on the low side. The explosive growth, according to analysts, will come in part because of the program’s expansion under ObamaCare, which, in participating states, has reduced eligibility requirements. Another reason for the surge in Medicaid rolls is all of the publicity surrounding the federal “Affordable Care Act,” which prompted more people to sign up. As the demand for healthcare is set to explode with government paying the bills, however, the supply of providers is already shrinking — a toxic combination for Americans who need healthcare.

Despite the “incentives” to expand Medicaid under ObamaCare, only about half of state governments took the bait and agreed to grow the program. Even in states that refused, Medicaid is already in trouble, with patients often facing long wait times for specialists, and sometimes even primary-care doctors. According to multiple news reports, meanwhile, the number of people enrolling in Medicaid even in those states is surging. In South Carolina, for example, which opted out of ObamaCare’s expansion of the scheme, officials are projecting a 16 percent increase in Medicaid enrollees over the next year and a half.

As *The New American* [reported](#) last month, ObamaCare has enrolled vastly more people in Medicaid than in private insurance. In states that went along with the ObamaCare expansion of the government healthcare program, however, the problems are growing even more quickly — and are set to accelerate. In an article headlined “[Medicaid Growth Could Aggravate Doctor Shortage](#),” the *New York Times* quoted a number of doctors and experts who described the looming crisis and how it will affect



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Americans.

In the San Diego area of California — among the states that agreed to expand its Medicaid rolls — the *Times* spoke with Dr. Ted Mazer, one of the few ear, nose, and throat specialists in the region who accepts Medicaid patients. With California expected to add as many as two million people to the program, Dr. Mazer said he will no longer be accepting new Medicaid patients because the government insurance scheme does not pay enough. “It’s a bad situation that is likely to be made worse,” the specialist was quoted as saying, a view that the *Times* noted was shared by “many” doctors across America.

Separately, a primary-care doctor in Los Angeles, Dr. Hector Flores, told the paper that he will be forced to limit Medicaid patients going forward. While about one third of his practice’s more than 25,000 existing patients are on Medicaid, Dr. Flores said he could take on only another 1,000 people who rely on the government’s taxpayer-funded insurance program. “There could easily be 10,000 patients looking for us, and we’re just not going to be able to serve them,” he explained.

According to a 2012 study, slightly more than half of California’s doctors were willing to accept new Medicaid patients last year. Instead of offering higher taxpayer-funded reimbursement rates to help expand supply, meanwhile, the *Times* reported that payment levels in some cases are set to be slashed by 10 percent. With the number of people on the program growing and the amount of doctors willing to take them shrinking, analysts say it is easy to see the impending crisis. Exactly what will happen with all of the new Medicaid patients seeking healthcare providers who are increasingly not going to be available remains to be seen — but analysts say the answer is obvious: No healthcare, or long waits.

“Medicaid is close to being totally broken. The stupidity of adding millions of new patients to a program that is failing — that Congress knows is failing — is beyond belief,” [noted](#) analyst Rick Moran at the *American Thinker*, commenting about the *Times*’ latest article on the shortage of doctors. “And the *New York Times* is just now getting around to realizing this? Total insularity added to rank partisanship is hardly the way to run a newspaper.” As Moran pointed out, the looming shortage of doctors and ObamaCare’s aggravation of the problem has been known for years. In fairness, though, even the *Times* noted last year that the shortages were “[likely to worsen](#)” under ObamaCare.

Outside of California, the shortages and issues are similar. “Obamacare comes with an insurance card, but not necessarily an easy path to a doctor,” explained a [recent article](#) in New Jersey’s *Star-Ledger* newspaper. Foundations and governments are pouring “grants” into the state’s healthcare system to try to alleviate the increasingly severe shortage of doctors, which is expected to accelerate. The funds are supposed to make the system more “efficient” by “re-structuring” it. However, analysts say patients in New Jersey can also look forward to much longer wait times — assuming they can get care at all.

In New York, meanwhile, experts are also expressing concerns about how ObamaCare will intensify the shortages. “It’s like shopping during Christmas time. I mean, you’re going to have a tough time if you have all of these people demanding services at the same time,” Dr. Steven Lamm with the NYU School of Medicine [told CBS New York](#) for an article about ObamaCare being “further hamstrung” by the lack of doctors. “I think the concern would be that the system will be overwhelmed, that there will be a greater demand than we can meet in a quality fashion and that we will have to delay services for a lot of individuals.”

Then there are all of those people — [many millions so far, and more to come, possibly as many as 80 million](#) — who lost the insurance plans they liked because of ObamaCare, [despite the lies about being](#)



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[able to keep it](#). With reduced eligibility requirements for Medicaid, a significant number of Americans who were insured by private companies are expected to transition over to government insurance. Indeed, the [process has already started](#). However, analysts say that instead of celebrating the fact that they qualify for “free” taxpayer-funded healthcare, those Americans ought to be very nervous, considering the growing shortages.

“As furious as people who have lost their private insurance are now, just wait until those ‘qualifying’ for Medicaid find out that the seeming freebie means they lost their plan, their doctor, and their health care,” [wrote](#) law Professor William Jacobson at Cornell Law School in a post for Legal Insurrection. “The result of all this will be a targeting of doctors. Forcing doctors to accept Medicaid patients will be the inevitable solution.”

The idea that an increasingly out-of-control government might resort to coercing doctors into compliance with its schemes may sound far-fetched now — before the full scope of the looming crisis becomes obvious. More than a few analysts and experts, though, expect it to happen sooner or later, as even [socialist Obama allies boast that ObamaCare is a mere stepping-stone on the road to full-blown socialized medicine](#). Mike Adams, editor of the popular health-oriented service Natural News, [expects](#) Democrats to eventually try to make it illegal for doctors to quit — enforced at gunpoint “because force is the only tool that socialists really understand, since they operate in total ignorance of the mechanisms of the free market and informed consumer choice.”

“With Obama and the democrats, it’s always ‘Mandate! Mandate! Mandate!’ even if it means assigning a government paramilitary worker to hold a pistol to the head of every doctor across America to make them see patients against their will,” [continued](#) Adams, who has been a vocal critic of ObamaCare and the current healthcare system dominated by government meddling. “And once the government has to resort to threats, penalties and force to make everyone comply, you end up with nothing more than an oppressive police state where everybody is angry, everybody lives in fear, and the costs of goods and service skyrocket because the free market is crippled.”

Of course, the nightmarish scenario currently unfolding in the form of doctor shortages is just one component of what a prominent Democrat lawmaker referred to as the ObamaCare “train-wreck.” As *The New American* has been reporting, many millions of Americans have [already lost their health insurance](#) plans under the new scheme — [despite the fact that Obama and fellow Democrats knowingly lied and claimed people could keep their coverage if they liked it](#). Costs, meanwhile, are skyrocketing. The healthcare.gov boondoggle still does not work. Unfortunately for Americans, however, this is just the beginning.

Alex Newman is a correspondent for The New American, covering economics, politics, and more. He can be reached at anewman@thenewamerican.com.

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