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# *The* RECORD

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## President Obama *on* Health

### **IMPROVING HEALTH FOR ALL AMERICANS**

*President Obama promised that he would make quality, affordable health care not a privilege, but a right. After nearly 100 years of talk, and decades of trying by presidents of both parties, that's exactly what he did. Today, 20 million more adults gained access to health coverage. We've driven the uninsured rate below 10 percent — the lowest level since we started keeping records — and built stronger, healthier communities through advancements in public health, science, and innovation.*

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#### **Improved Access to Care**

- Prohibited coverage denials and reduced benefits due to pre-existing conditions
- Eliminated lifetime and annual limits on insurance coverage and established annual limits on out-of-pocket spending on essential health benefits
- Required health plans to cover dependent children up to age 26
- Prohibited retroactive cancellation of policies, except in the case of fraud, eliminating the practice of people developing costly illnesses and then losing their coverage
- Expanded Medicaid to all previously ineligible adults with incomes under 133 percent of the federal poverty level with unprecedented federal support (the Supreme Court directed that this expansion be at the discretion of states)
- Established a system of state and federal health insurance exchanges or marketplaces to make it easier for individuals and small-business employees to purchase health plans at affordable prices

- Simplified health choices by requiring individual and small business plans to offer four standard categories at various costs, plus a catastrophic option for people under age 30 and people who cannot otherwise afford coverage
- Established individual responsibility by requiring all Americans who can afford insurance coverage to purchase it or pay a fee
- Established employer responsibility under which mid-size and large companies provide health coverage to their workers or contribute to their coverage through a fee
- Ensured individual and small business health plans include essential health benefits, covering emergency services, hospitalization, maternity and newborn care, preventive care such as annual physicals, and more
- Simplified eligibility and enrollment requirements in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Expanded Community Health Centers and incentives for primary care providers to practice in the communities that need them most
- Created a new FDA approval pathway to advance biosimilars, which offer the potential to lower treatment costs for patients on high-cost biologics
- Provided new home- and community-based options for elderly and disabled Americans who require long-term care services
- Introduced new coverage options and other improvements for Native Americans through an improved Indian Health Service
- Created a temporary reinsurance program to sustain group coverage for early retirees prior to 2014 reforms
- Created a temporary high-risk pool program to cover uninsured people with pre-existing conditions prior to 2014 reforms
- Created health plan disclosure requirements and simple, standardized summaries so consumers can evaluate coverage information and compare benefits
- Provided funding for a voluntary home-visiting program to support mothers and young children in underserved communities
- Covered HIV screening for millions without additional cost and prohibited discrimination due to pre-existing conditions like HIV
- Created a new funding pool for Community Health Centers to build, expand and operate health-care facilities in underserved communities
- Expanded health provider training opportunities, with an emphasis on primary care, including a significant expansion of the National Health Service Corps

- Improved policy and extended funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program, which provides coverage for millions of low-income children, in 2009 and extended those policies in 2015

### **Made Health Care and Coverage More Affordable**

- Established financial assistance to help individuals and families who otherwise cannot afford health coverage purchase it through state and federal marketplaces
- Created a tax credit for small businesses that provide health coverage to their employees
- Prohibited charging more for women to receive coverage
- Prohibited charging more for people at risk – those who have pre-existing conditions, work in high-risk jobs, or have family histories of health problems – and prevented excessive charges for older Americans
- Required health insurers to provide consumers with rebates if the amount they spend on health benefits and quality of care, as opposed to advertising and marketing, is too low
- Instituted an annual review process to prevent health plans from imposing excessive and unreasonable rate increases
- Allowed employer health plans to provide incentives for workers related to wellness programs
- Eliminated out-of-pocket costs for preventive services like immunizations, certain cancer screenings, contraception, obesity screening and counseling, and behavioral assessments for children
- Phases out the “donut hole” coverage gap for Medicare prescription drug coverage to save Medicare beneficiaries money
- Expanded competitive bidding in Medicare to lower costs for durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs and hospital beds
- Created new Medicare payment and delivery models to pay for the value rather than the volume of services provided, as well as the new Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation to promote improvement in health care quality and costs through the development and testing of innovative health care payment and service delivery models
- Created Accountable Care Organizations consisting of doctors and other health-care providers who commit to improve the quality and reduce the cost of patient care and get to share in savings from keeping patients well
- Ensured Medicare Advantage plans are paid accurately and required plans to spend at least 85 percent of Medicare revenue on patient care, while enrollment has grown by over 60 percent and average premiums have dropped by 13 percent since passage of the Affordable Care Act.

- Reduced drug costs through increased Medicaid rebates, expanded discount programs, and established a new system for approval of more affordable versions of biologic drugs

### **Improved Accountability, Efficiency, and Quality of Care**

- Established new transparency requirements and a “star rating” system for hospitals, nursing homes, Medicare Advantage plans, physicians, and other providers to give consumers information related to quality and cost
- Provided incentives to hospitals in Medicare to reduce hospital-acquired infections and avoidable readmissions
- Linked Medicare payments to physicians, hospitals, and other providers to quality of care improvements and lower costs
- Improved coordination of care between Medicare and Medicaid to better serve individuals who receive care through both programs. Formed the Elder Justice Coordinating Council to identify and prevent elder abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Included tools to combat fraud, including increased sentencing guidelines for criminal health care fraud with over \$1 million in losses and new prevention and detection efforts that identify fraudulent activity and prevent inappropriate payments
- Increased consumer protection and community service requirements for charitable hospitals
- Raised the Medicare hospital insurance tax and imposed a new tax on net investment income for high income taxpayers in order to strengthen the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund
- Required drug and medical-device manufacturers to publicly disclose payments and other compensation, like gifts and travel, to physicians and teaching hospitals to limit conflicts of interest (also known as the “sunshine” provision)
- Required the posting of calorie information on menus of chain restaurants with 20 or more locations and vending machines
- Promoted the adoption and usage of certified electronic health records by doctors, hospitals, and other providers
- Delivered a fix to the Medicare physician payment problem, eliminating cliffs for payments to physicians, while protecting patient-doctor relationships and creating incentives for quality of care improvements, lower costs, and adopting alternative payment models
- Created new policies to improve nursing home quality and safety

## **Addressed the Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic**

- Signed into the 21st Century Cures Act, which funds the President's \$1 billion proposal to combat the opioid epidemic and enacts mental health reforms focused on serious mental illness, suicide prevention, and mental health parity protections
- Developed a comprehensive, intergovernmental strategy to combat outbreaks of the flu (H1N1), Ebola, and other infectious diseases, and to address critical prescription drug shortages
- Expanded access to medication-assisted treatment of opioid use disorders
- Released a new guideline for prescribing opioids for chronic pain to help primary care providers ensure the safest and most effective treatment for their patients
- Announced a new \$11 million funding opportunity to States to purchase the opioid overdose reversal drug, naloxone, and train first responders and others in its use
- Announced a Presidential Memorandum requiring Federal Departments to provide training on appropriate opioid prescribing to Federal health care professionals and requiring Departments to develop plans to address barriers to opioid use disorder treatment in Federal programs.
- Required substance use disorder benefits to be included in all health plans offered in the individual and small group insurance markets
- Finalized mental health and substance use disorder parity rules to ensure greater equity between these benefits and medical and surgical care benefits in group, individual and Medicaid health plans.
- Collected a record amount of unused prescription drugs through the 2016 National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day
- Launched a heroin response strategy through public health-public safety partnerships in regional High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas in Appalachia, New England, Philadelphia/Camden, New York/New Jersey, Washington/Baltimore, Ohio and Michigan
- Amplified the first-ever Surgeon General Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health covering prevention, treatment and recovery

## **Increased Access to Mental Health Services**

- Eliminated out-of-pocket costs for recommended preventive services, including depression screenings for adults and adolescents, through the Affordable Care Act
- Formed the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Task Force to work together to ensure that Americans are benefiting from the mental health and substance use disorder parity protections under the Affordable Care Act

- Signed the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act, to improve mental health care and suicide prevention programs for veterans
- Hosted the White House National Conference on Mental Health to reduce stigma and help the millions of Americans struggling with mental health problems
- Issued an Executive Order to improve mental health services for veterans, service members, and military families
- Announced 19 new executive actions that the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are taking to improve the mental health of service members, veterans and their families
- Invested \$100 million to improve access to mental health services

### **Strengthened Nutrition Standards and Promoted Healthy Living**

- Promoted public-health initiatives that target heart disease, diabetes, and other conditions that afflict large segments of the population
- Created new powers for the Food and Drug Administration to regulate tobacco products, offering significant new tools to combat preventable diseases
- Created new laws and regulations to improve food safety
- Established Let's Move!, an initiative led by First Lady Michelle Obama dedicated to helping kids and families lead healthier lives
- Established practical, science-based nutrition standards for school meals
- Enacted Smart Snacks in School: practical, science-based nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages sold to children during the school day
- Enabled schools and local educational agencies with high poverty rates to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students
- Modernized the Nutrition Facts label to help consumers make healthier choices
- Cut artificial trans fat from the food supply
- Updated the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in 2010 and 2015 to reflect the latest body of science and encourage healthy eating patterns and created MyPlate and its Spanish-language version MiPlato
- Improved food safety to ensure the U.S food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it
- Required the posting of calorie information on menus of chain restaurants with 20 or more locations and vending machines

- Improved nutrition standards across the armed services
- Reauthorized the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to include important investments that help participants move to self-sufficiency, strengthen program integrity, modernize technology, and emphasize good nutrition
- Expanded access to healthy foods in underserved communities while increasing farmers' and ranchers' customer base by making Electronic Benefits Transfer available at farmers markets
- Initiated a Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer demonstration project to reduce food insecurity among children during the summer
- Increased access to healthy food choices for families participating in SNAP
- Launched a multi-year, multi-agency Healthy Food Financing Initiative to leverage private funds to increase the availability of affordable, healthy foods in underserved urban and rural communities across the country