



HEALTHCARE ROUND-UP



February 8, 2017

[Trump: Obamacare Replacement Might Take a Year](#)

Politico

President Donald Trump walked back his recent vow that Obamacare would be replaced in short order, telling FOX News' Bill O'Reilly that the process is "complicated" and "maybe it'll take till sometime into next year."

[Speaker Ryan Says Obamacare Replacement Will Pass This Year](#)

The New York Times

Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) said that legislation to replace the ACA would be completed this year, trying to dispel the idea that the party is retreating from its campaign promise to dismantle Obamacare quickly.

[Issues Facing Republicans in Replacing the Affordable Care Act](#)

The New York Times

Ever since Democrats began pushing the ACA through Congress more than seven years ago, Republicans have been trying to come up with an alternative. Candid conversations leaked from a conclave of Republican lawmakers in Philadelphia last month, and public comments since, show they are nowhere near agreement. The leaked audio recordings revealed that Republicans recognize the technical complexity and political difficulty of the task they have set for themselves: repealing the law known as Obamacare and replacing it with a new plan that, in the words of President Trump, provides "better health care for more people at a lesser cost."

[Obamacare Repeal-Replace Effort Begins to Jell](#)

Politico

Republicans on Capitol Hill and within the Trump administration are scrambling to get Obamacare repeal efforts back on track by stuffing as much of a replacement policy as possible into a repeal bill. Four replacement measures are under consideration, with a goal of beginning work on the legislation in the relevant House committees by the end of February, according to congressional sources familiar with the tentative plans.

[Employers Fret Job-Based Coverage Vulnerable To Fallout from GOP Health Overhaul](#)

Kaiser Health News

Employer-sponsored medical plans still cover more Americans than any other type, typically with greater benefits and lower out-of-pocket expense. Recent cost increases for job-based coverage have been a tiny fraction of those for Obamacare plans for individuals. Now, as President Donald Trump promises a replacement for the ACA that will provide "insurance for everybody," employers worry Republican attempts to redo other parts of the insurance market could harm their much larger one.



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[HSAs: 'Tax-Break Trifecta' or Insurance Gimmick Benefiting the Wealthy?](#)

Kaiser Health News

They are just three little words - "health savings accounts" - but they are generating a lot of buzz as Republicans contemplate plans to repeal and replace the ACA. Expanding the use of such accounts, based on a long-held conservative view that consumers should be more responsible for their healthcare spending, is part of almost every GOP replacement plan under consideration on Capitol Hill. Here's the theory behind HSAs: Making consumers bear a bigger up-front share of medical care - while making it easier to save money tax-free for those costs - will result in more judicious use of the health system that could ultimately slow rising costs. While the details of the current proposals differ, they all generally seek to allow larger tax-free contributions to the accounts and greater flexibility on the types of medical services for which those funds can be used.

[Sen. Cassidy Shares Insights on ACA, HSAs, Benefit Taxes](#)

Employee Benefits News

Since taking office in January 2015, Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) has made fighting for brokers one of his priorities. He, along with Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) have introduced the Patient Freedom Act, a proposed replacement to the ACA. This bill would allow states to decide their future by keeping the ACA, switching to a different insurance expansion or going forward with no coverage expansion at all. A similar bill, written by Cassidy and Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX), called The World's Greatest Healthcare Plan, was also introduced in the House.

[Seven Things Employers Need to Know about the 21st Century Cures Act](#)

Employee Benefits News

The bipartisan passage of the 21st Century Cures Act on Dec. 13, 2016, supports swift approval of new drugs and medical devices by the FDA, increased government funding for mental illness and drug abuse aid, and medical research for diseases such as cancer and Alzheimer's. However, there's one provision to the law — the Small Business Healthcare Relief Act (SBHRA) — that received little attention, but could have a major impact on small employers and the way they offer health benefits to employees in the future.

[Few Employers Believe HDHPs Have Been Effective for Cost-Cutting](#)

PlanSponsor

Controlling costs and keeping benefits affordable for their workforce remain employers' top benefits priorities, but traditional approaches are proving to be less effective, causing some employers to shift strategies, according to a study by the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America. The study report, [Benefits Balancing Act](#), reveals less than one-third of companies believe employee cost-sharing and high deductible health plans (HDHPs) have been highly successful in achieving cost-cutting objectives.

[How Does an Employer Comply with HIPAA's Privacy Rule When Reporting Health Plan Enrollment Information on Form 1095-C?](#)

EBIA Newsletter

QUESTION: My company is an applicable large employer (ALE) with a self-insured health plan. What steps must we take under HIPAA's privacy rule when we report enrollment information for employees and dependents on Form 1095-C?

As always, feel free to suggest topics we should cover in future emails. If you have any questions or experience any problems with links, please send a note to [Sarah Youssef](#) or [Thom Stohler](#).

Thom Stohler

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