



Before the passage of the Affordable Care Act, America sat at or near the bottom in most of the important rankings of access to and quality of care. Health care economists report that, in America, you die sooner and spend more time disabled than other industrialized nations.

This isn't because America doesn't spend enough money on care. Health care expenditures account for over one-sixth of our economy. America leads all other industrial nations in health care costs, yet falls significantly behind in quality and has worse outcomes. Insurance premiums are on the rise, while too many citizens are underinsured or not insured at all. The Affordable Care Act will – if the Supreme Court allows it to continue working – expand insurance coverage, strengthen consumer protections, and drive improvements in the practice of medicine. But even without the Affordable Care Act, some states are leading the way.

Solution

Oregon is one of those states. Oregon made national headlines when it started the Oregon Health Plan to extend eligibility to the working poor. Since its establishment in 1994, the Oregon Health Plan has provided high-quality, evidence-based health care. Using this model, Oregon provides care to nearly 660,000 people and has saved the federal and state government more than \$15 billion.

The state is dedicated to continuous innovation, with a particular focus on how health care is delivered. Last month, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved a \$1.9 billion investment in a statewide demonstration project for Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs). CCOs will keep Oregonians healthier by integrating physical, mental, and dental health care, with an increased emphasis on wellness and prevention. Care will be more effective and efficient, responding to the needs of the patient, rather than reacting to medical crises. These CCOs will help save over \$12 billion in Medicaid costs over the next decade.

Oregon has also cultivated one of the most competitive insurance markets in the country. Aided by a strong culture of consumer protection, the state insurance division reviews profits and expenditures of insurance companies, ensuring that proposed rate hikes are justified—and reducing them when they are not. The health insurance exchange being developed will only help to strengthen competition and provide even more choice for consumers.

Decreasing Medicare expenditures and fighting widespread fraud and abuse is an issue for much of the country. But Oregon’s Medicare expenditure rates are among the lowest in the nation, spending 25% less on health care than the national average. Proving that sometimes less is more, Oregonians achieve better health outcomes through our commitment to high quality, more efficient health care.

No matter what the fate of the national Affordable Care Act with this week’s Supreme Court decision, Oregon’s efforts to promote high-quality, evidence-based care will continue. I look forward to continuing my support for the Oregon approach to health care at the federal level.

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