



US Presidential Election 2016

Impact on the Health Care

Shikha Saini

Department of Microbiology and Immunology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Illinois, USA

✉ Email: ssaini@uic.edu

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Improvement in health care is one of the primary goals for both developing and developed countries. In this presidential election in the United States, this aspect has been prioritized for the campaigns. Though health care is an individualized approach and should depend on patient and health care providers, but it is mainly defined by the insurance companies and coverage. The United States, despite of being the leading investor in health care, have not reached the satisfactory health potential. The ongoing campaign can be a constructive step towards designing future health policy solutions. There are three main concerns that need to be addressed which include (a) continuation or repeal of Affordable Care Act (ACA), (b) budgeting the expenditure on health care and biomedical research, and (c) extending the Medicare program for the beneficiaries.¹

ACA or Obamacare has been successful in providing insurance to the millions of Americans, including minorities which helped in the growth in the health care sector especially in states where Medicaid was increased accordingly. However, the limitations of this program were observed as well. Several commercial insurance providers stepped back from the marketplace because of the losses due to underpricing. The current proposal is to reform ACA in a way that both government-run and private insurance providers coexist to cater to the different needs of people. Instead of subsidizing the insurance for all, it might be personalized as per the requirement of the states or people. But then the question arises, will everyone get the insurance they need?

Price hikes in the prescription drugs is yet another problem that the health care system is currently facing. Absence of generic drugs for several effective but costly drugs added extra cost for the insurance providers. So, the choice for the patients is to either pay from the pocket or let go of the treatment. It is important to address the current situation during this election to reach a consensus between an efficient coverage and effective cost. Even with different viewpoints of opponents in health care policies, the major goal of this presidential election is to improve the public health by providing value based healthcare. One example of a value-based healthcare model is accountable care

Dr. Shikha Saini has earned her PhD in Cancer Biology from National Institute of Immunology, India and current working on anaplastic thyroid cancer. She has published and peer-reviewed several research articles in prestigious international journals. She has won Dr. G. P. Talwar young investigator award in 2014 for her outstanding work. She is currently serving as an associate editor in *International Journal of Medicine and Surgery* and *International Journal of Women's Health and Reproduction Sciences*.



organizations. These are groups of physicians, hospitals, and other health providers that voluntarily come together to take responsibility for the cost and quality of care for their patient population. If they reduce spending while maintaining quality of care for their patients, they have an opportunity to share in savings. It will take a President diligent working and execution of strong leadership with Congress to make health insurance more affordable and create greater transparency throughout the industry.

Funding for biomedical research also needs to be strengthened for improving the health care outcomes. Currently, The United States is investing more than 130 billion dollars for research in healthcare. However, the funding situation is still tight for certain health care areas because of constant flow of money towards several diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer disease, and more recently, Zika virus outbreak. Budget should be dwindled and federal money should be reallocated to meet the needs of the situation. America has always been the frontier in supporting the health care research even across the boundaries. Education, Research, Discovery and Innovation are indispensable for achieving the desired growth in health. Research based strengthening of health is imperative and critical issue that needs consideration during the presidential election and more importantly, execution after the selection of president.

The highly popular Medicare program provides comprehensive hospitalization, physician care and drugs to virtually all seniors of 65 years and older.² Seniors are obliged to pay premiums to receive health care coverage, but a substantial portion of the cost is picked up by

the federal government. Increasing the benefits in the Medicare program would be a tough task as it would destabilize the federal funding for Obamacare and clash with existing federal insurance policies. The idea for “Medicare for all” would be difficult to execute since it will force the reduction of benefits of the existing Medicare beneficiaries. Expansion in Medicare program is desired but has lot of practical and financial constraints.

Other health policy issues that need to be addressed are (a) poor health of Americans associated with unhealthful food, (b) drug abuse, (c) violence and other non-medical factors that impact health; the differences in health between the affluent and low-income populations; and how to promote and disseminate the benefits of biomedical innovation. No matter who wins the election,

the structuring of plan for moderating the growth of spending of the physician, pharmaceutical companies and insurance component of health care would be extremely tough. Future goals of US election 2016 are to obtain strong leadership and execution of plans and ambitions for better health.

References

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