

POLICY FORUM

Continuing the Turbulent Progress of Health Care Reform

Introduction

It is an historical fact that most every attempt to add to or reform American health care has been a battle, criticized by providers and consumers and the political left and right, and marked by clashes in the media, the courts, and the court of public opinion.

This was true post-WWI, when Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded what is now Social Security but died before he was able to address health care. It was true over 50 years ago when Lyndon B. Johnson introduced and passed legislation creating Medicare and Medicaid as key building blocks of The Great Society.

In each case, initial skepticism and outcry subsided and these programs became part of the basic fabric of our social safety net. Still debated yet still intact, each has not only provided health care to millions but spurred innovations in quality, cost control, and efficiency.

The history of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is no different. The ACA stands alongside these milestones, sometimes praised, sometimes vilified, still challenged in the courts, still clarified on the front lines, and like its predecessors, more popular now than when first enacted.

Read on for a 10-year evaluation of the ACA's successes and shortcomings across the nation and right here in North Carolina. NCMJ

*Peter J. Morris, MD, MPH, MDiv
Editor in Chief*