

Breaking Down the Bill:

Muddled Myths and Misconceptions

By *Matthieu Drotar*

With the 2012 election right around the corner, Americans are faced with an endless stream of political rhetoric, mudslinging and misinformation. At times, it can seem impossible to distinguish the truth from rumors, lies, and embellishments.

Last week, we broke down what the healthcare bill has done thus far, and how it has affected the everyday family. In this installment of "Breaking Down The Bill," popular concerns and myths, along with the current political status of "Obamacare," will be spotlighted.

In addition to hot-button topics like the economy and illegal immigration, healthcare reform has been a central topic to the recent sparring between potential presidential candidates. Because of this, a lot of generalizations and misleading information has been said about President Obama's healthcare plan.

Comments made from democrats and republicans alike have left many feeling misled and confused regarding the healthcare bill. Below are simple explanations of three of the most popular misconceptions of Obama's healthcare plan.

Myth #1: The Healthcare Bill will lead to a "Government Takeover"

This myth, along with its cousin "the bill is one step closer to socialism," is particularly popular among the bill's republican critics. Many believe that "Obamacare" is proposing one government-run program that covers everyone, similar to what is already implemented in Canada and several European countries.

The verdict? False. President Obama has said that those who are happy with their private coverage may continue with their plans.

Myth #2: The Government will set up "Death Panels" to decide the fate of Medicare patients

Originated by former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin in 2008, this misconception states that the healthcare bill will set up

secret panels to make end-of-life decisions for those on Medicare.

The verdict? False. In reality, the amendment in question aimed to cover the cost of end-of-life option discussions for Medicare patients. Though this claim was proved factually erroneous, this amendment has been dropped.

Myth #3: "Obamacare" will use taxpayers money to fund abortions

This myth states that the healthcare bill will use money raised by taxes to subsidize abortions, an extremely sensitive topic within itself.

The Verdict? False. The legislation would use beneficiary premiums to pay for abortions, not taxpayers' money or government subsidies. In short, there would be little difference between "Obamacare" and most current healthcare plans in regard to abortion coverage. Where does "Obamacare" stand?

On January 31, 2011, United States District Judge Roger Vinson declared "Obamacare" unconstitutional and ordered all implementation to stop immediately.

Vinson's ruling comes as a result of a mandate that requires citizens to buy insurance, an idea that violates the constitution's "commerce clause."

This clause states that Congress shall have no power to "regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states."

An appeal to the Supreme Court has since been filed on behalf of the healthcare bill. Despite Vinson's ruling, implementation will continue until a Supreme Court ruling is reached.

Next week, in the third part of our series on the new health care bill, we will take a look at the healthcare bill in action by examining a first-hand account of how "Obamacare" has affected residents of the Baltimore area.

Inaugural Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award Winner Honored



(L-R) President and founder of Newborn Holistic Ministries, Todd Marcus and Elder Harris, were presented with the inaugural Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award by Robert Blum, director of the Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute.

Photo by Joshua Franzos

Baltimore— The Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute named Newborn Holistic Ministries the winner of the inaugural Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award.

Named in honor of Henrietta Lacks, the award recognizes and supports Baltimore community organizations that collaborate with The Johns Hopkins University to improve the health and well being of the city of Baltimore.

The award was presented on October 1, 2011 at the second Henrietta Lacks Memorial Lecture at the university.

Newborn Holistic Ministries is one of nearly two-dozen established community-university collaborations from across the city nominated for the inaugural award of \$15,000. The organization was selected by a panel of leadership from community and city organizations and Johns Hopkins as a model collaboration for creating and sustaining healthier communities.

"Newborn Holistic Ministries represents the best of what community-initiated programs in partnership with Johns Hopkins and other institutions can accomplish," says Dr. Robert Blum, director of the Urban Health Institute. "It is about the rebirth of a neighborhood and the rejuvenation of community residents at the same time."

Newborn Holistic Ministries was founded in 1996 to preserve and enrich life in Baltimore's Sandtown-Winchester and Upton communities by providing services to enable residents to meet their material, social and spiritual needs.

Newborn has significantly revitalized the 1900 and 2000 blocks of Pennsylvania Avenue while also running Martha's Place, a program for women overcoming drug addiction and homelessness, and Jubilee Arts, a program that offers arts classes and cultural opportunities as alternatives to violence and drugs. Johns Hopkins collaborates with Newborn through student internships and by providing resident physicians who serve clients of Martha's Place.

Henrietta Lacks was an East Baltimore resident and cervical cancer patient in the early 1950s at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, where cells taken from her tumor became the first "immortal" human cells grown in culture and led to breakthroughs in cell research related to cancer, AIDS, the effects of radiation and more. The Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award honors Mrs. Lacks and her family and is intended to be an enduring reminder of her contribution to medical science and to her community.

Please send your community calendar events to:
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