



# Health care policy changes less likely



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Expect the nation's health-insurance system to remain adrift. During the 2016 campaign, President **Donald Trump** promised a great health care plan with coverage for everybody. He joined in a pre-existing GOP chorus for ripping up the current system known as Obamacare. Extravagant promises, but no workable plan, followed. That's where matters will remain indefinitely.

Two years passed with Trump's party controlling both houses of Congress. But "repeal-and-replace" never occurred in the form of the required legislative agreement. It ended up more like "ignite and ignore." Early on, as is his habit, Trump blamed everyone else involved for the failure.

Now the chances for such a sweeping bill are dashed at least until 2021, with real negotiations among the players as unlikely as ever.

Democrats now controlling the House of Representatives won't bail out Trump's vague health-policy promises any more than the GOP-run House knuckled under to President **Barack Obama**.

None of the proposed Democratic fixes to the status quo — ranging from "Medicare for all" to incremental changes in current law — will meet the approval of the president or the Senate's Republican majority.

Don't expect Trump to step in to broker the details of a needed deal.



AP / SUSAN WALSH

The president is now backing letting the courts repeal the ACA.

The Kaiser Family Foundation in March cited polling that found 54 percent of Americans holding a "favorable view" of the current Affordable Care Act, higher than before.

On the heels of a Texas judge's key ruling, Trump is now backing the rather passive strategy of letting the courts repeal the ACA. But just as when he forced a partial shutdown to get billions from Congress for his border "wall," the president is putting Sen. **Mitch McConnell's** GOP majority and Rep. **Kevin McCarthy's** Republican minority on the spot with little potential impact.

If the repeal is upheld, creating a void in the law, both **McConnell** and **McCarthy** — in tandem with Trump and House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** (D-Calif.) — might have to agree on whether and how to insure people whose options have been cut.

Or they could collectively find a way to kick the can down

the road again.

Reports spread at the Capitol Wednesday that **McCarthy** told Trump on the phone that his strategy of backing a court-imposed repeal made no sense.

By the end of last week **McConnell** made it clear he wouldn't take the lead on a Trump health care proposal if one existed.

"I look forward to seeing what the president is proposing and *what he can work out* with the speaker," **McConnell** said (emphasis added).

Thus the facts mocked another Trump-promoted fantasy — that "the Republican Party will soon be known as the party of health care."

And so the health-insurance gridlock lives on. For all the president's resonant campaign complaints about an ACA created by and for insurance companies, the status quo prevails well into his tenure with no sign of a concerted effort to change it.

## SPINCYCLE

GUIDE TO POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

### Teaching from experience

Nassau's youngest county legislator is headed back to school as college professor, teaching about the challenges of running for political office as a young person.

**Joshua Lafazan**, 25, will teach a new course at LIU Post called, "Running for Office in the 21st Century: Why America's Next Generation Can Run For Office Now and Win!"

Lafazan, who caucuses with Democrats but is not registered with a political party, won his first election in 2012 at age 18 when he was elected to the Syosset school board.

Lafazan, of Woodbury, recalled a lesson from early mentors about fundraising: Tap extended family members for donations first, framing the ask as an investment in his vision.

Lafazan said he'll offer students practical advice, such as: hire young and energetic interns; exhibit humility; don't take public criticism too personally; and, if you can't afford to print literature in a shape that'll hang from door-



BARRY SLOAN

Legis. Joshua Lafazan

knobs, punch a hole and tie a rubber band around it.

He said he expected guest speakers to include Nassau County Executive **Laura Curran**, state Comptroller **Thomas DiNapoli**, of Great Neck Plaza, and Democratic National Committeeman **Robert Zimmerman**, of Great Neck.

Required homework will include attendance at a local government meeting.

— Scott Eidler

### Suffolk GOP audit ahead

The Suffolk Republican Committee is about to conduct an audit of party finances, according to several high-level party sources.

Ex-party chairman **John Jay LaValle** left his post March 18 with less than \$800 left in party coffers.

Brookhaven GOP chairman **Jesse Garcia**, who is slated to become Suffolk GOP leader next month, said an audit is "a normal course of action" when a new leader takes over, and he had one conducted when he took over the Brookhaven GOP organization.

In its Jan. 15 campaign finance report, the Suffolk GOP reported \$13,687 in its campaign and housekeeping accounts. The last report of the party's Chairman's Club in November showed \$2,007.

But the GOP held a \$250-a-head fundraiser in February that brought in about \$25,000.

LaValle said "there's no need for an audit," and his plan all along was to pay party bills and leave the GOP debt-free. LaValle also said that over the years, he at times voluntarily went without pay when the party was short of funds, but he never tried to collect. He said his last paycheck was short by two days.

Suffolk County Democrats in their latest report showed \$208,764 on hand as of March 11. Officials said the party at its county dinner last week in Holbrook raised another \$400,000 from an estimated 500 donors.

— Rick Brand

The 1600 is Newsday's daily inside look at the Trump presidency

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