



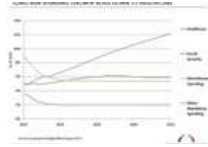
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# Supreme Court ruling or not, health reform is here to stay

Posted by Sarah Kliff at 09:48 AM ET, 11/16/2011

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(HARRY CABLUCK - AP)

AUSTIN, Tex. —

This week, the Supreme Court took up a major challenge to the legality of the nation's new health reform act. But as the justices begin hearing the closely-watched case, businesses won't be waiting around for the ruling -- they're already working to meet the new mandates.

And because those changes would be hard to reverse, according to a smart piece in Tuesday's New York Times, even a ruling against the law won't keep the Affordable Care Act from making a lasting impact on the health care industry.

A lot of this is happening in a state that's no friend to the health reform law: Texas. I've spent the past few days here, and nearly every health care company official I've interviewed said that the company had

shifted its business strategy because of the Affordable Care Act. Health systems are becoming more integrated, preparing for payment reforms like Accountable Care Organizations, meant to prize quality of care over quantity.

"There's a lot changing [with the health reform law], and the only thing we can focus on is improving quality and behaving more like an integrated system," says Jose Camacho, executive director of the Texas Health Community Centers.

Health insurance plans, meanwhile, have started aiming to lower increases in premiums.

What's driving that? A health reform provision requiring reviews of all double-digit rate hikes.

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rmgregory wrote:

11/16/2011 3:57 PM CST

Ironically, you're making the point that the majority of states have been making in Court: the illegal mandates of the Obama/Pelosi PPACA are effectively implemented at this very moment and, therefore, the majority of states now pleading for redress indeed do have standing to do so due to the burden imposed by the law. At least on this one point -- that the Obama/Pelosi PPACA is already a burden on already-burdened job-providing businesses and their employees -- we are all agreed.

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bobmounger wrote:

11/16/2011 2:13 PM CST

Competition? What a joke. I live in Dallas, was diagnosed with type II diabetes last year, & if I can't find a company to buy me medical insurance the only thing I qualify for is a blue cross state run program that cost \$30,000/year. Go look at the Willow Bend mall in Plano. The whole thing is a giant indoor ad for a local hospital, even the children's play area is full of statues of Looney Toons characters dressed as DOCTORS.

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Ezra Klein is the editor of Wonkblog and a columnist at the Washington Post, as well as a contributor to MSNBC and Bloomberg. His work focuses on domestic and economic policymaking, as well as the political system that's constantly screwing it up. He really likes graphs, and is on [Twitter](#), [Google+](#) and [Facebook](#). E-mail him [here](#).

Sarah Kliff



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Suzy Khimm covers the budget, economic policy, and financial regulatory reform. Before coming to Washington, she was based in Brazil and Southeast Asia, where she wrote for the Economist, Slate, and the Wall Street Journal Asia. Follow her on [Twitter](#) [here](#), and email her [here](#).

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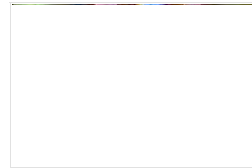
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