

Experts say Donald Trump's health plan lacks substance

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Left- and right-leaning healthcare policy experts are speaking out against leading Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's recently released healthcare plan that they say is full of contradictions and unrealistic policy changes.

In an opinion piece for *U.S. News and World Report*, Henry Aaron, a senior fellow in economic studies at the Brookings Institute, writes that Trump's fluctuating views on healthcare have left many unsure of the GOP front-runner's true position, and his formal policy offers no additional clarity. Although Trump supports repealing the Affordable Care Act, he proposed keeping a main provision of the law that requires health insurers to offer coverage to individuals with pre-existing conditions. At the same time, he plans to repeal the requirement that everyone carry health insurance and eliminate healthcare subsidies.

Trump previously called the ACA a "disaster" and said his new plan would provide universal coverage without any government funding.

Michael Cannon, director of health policy studies at the libertarian Cato Institute, told *MedPage Today* that Trump's plan revealed his "ignorance" of viable health policies. Cannon added that Trump has been "all over the map" in what he tells the media versus the plan he's outlined on his website.

"It appears that this is just some campaign operative copying and pasting boilerplate Republican ideas that they found on the Web," he told *MedPage Today*.

Jeff Anderson, a senior fellow at the right-leaning Hudson Institute, told the news outlet that Trump's plan offers no legitimate plan to help with the subsequent coverage gaps of repealing the ACA. Anderson, who co-founded a project to repeal and replace Obamacare, criticized Trump's continuation of the pre-existing condition mandate, arguing that it's contrary to the concept of insurance.

Healthcare policies have become a main focal point for both political parties as the presidential primaries intensify. One bright spot of Trump's plan, though, is the push for price transparency that would allow patients to shop for procedures based on price. Price transparency has become a sticking point for healthcare payment reform advocates who want to provide patients the opportunity to make informed care decisions.