

THE FISCAL TIMES

Focus on Health

By BRUCE BARTLETT, The Fiscal Times on Oct 21, 2010

An **October 15 survey** by Kaiser analyzes those that say they are opposed to the new health reform law. When questioned more carefully, many opponents actually support many, if not most, provisions of the law and object to only a few.

In an **October 14 post**, health analyst Aaron Carroll examined life expectancy at age 65 and finds that it has grown much more slowly in the U.S. than in other major countries since 1990, even though everyone in that age group is covered by Medicare.

On **October 13**, the Cato Institute released a new **study** of the Affordable Care Act by Duke University economist Christopher Conover. It concludes that the legislation may reduce real GDP by as much as \$550 billion over the next 10 years.

On **October 8**, Princeton University economist Uwe Reinhardt **examined** the pros and cons of “pay for performance” in health care, which many analysts believe has great potential for reducing costs.

In an **October 7 report**, the Congressional Budget Office examined projected growth in veterans’ health costs.

On **October 7**, the journal Health Affairs published an **article** which found that the U.S. ranked 49 among countries in terms of life expectancy.

The **issue** of the journal Health Affairs released on October 4 contains a number of articles on comparative effectiveness research.

On **September 25**, the Associated Press released an extensive **poll** asking people detailed questions about the Affordable Care Act. It finds that many people do not know or misunderstand what the legislation does and that many of those opposed to it thought it did not go far enough.

In a **September 24 commentary**, Princeton economist Uwe Reinhardt examined the obstacles to restraining national health care spending. He concludes that they are virtually insurmountable.

On **September 23**, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development published new **data** comparing obesity rates among its member countries. The U.S. had the highest rate of obesity.

On **September 21**, a **report** from George Washington University’s Department of Health Policy examined the cost of obesity. It finds that the overall, tangible, annual costs of being obese are \$4,879 for an obese woman and \$2,646 for an obese man.

A **September 14 article** by Brookings Institution economists Ross Hammond and Ruth Levine examined the

economic impact of obesity. They estimate the excess health costs associated with obesity may be as much as \$147 billion annually.

On **September 9**, the National Academy of Social Insurance published a [study](#) showing that medical care now accounts for more than 50 percent of workers' compensation outlays.

An [article](#) in the **September** issue of the Survey of Current Business attempts to reconcile different estimates of total health care spending in the U.S.

I last posted items on this topic on [September 14](#).

*Bruce Bartlett is an American historian and columnist who focuses on the intersection between politics and economics. He [blogs daily](#) and writes a weekly column at The Fiscal Times. Read his most recent column [here](#). Bartlett has written for Forbes Magazine and Creators Syndicate, and his work is informed by many years in government, including as a senior policy analyst in the Reagan White House. He is the author of seven books including the New York Times best-seller, *Impostor: How George W. Bush Bankrupted America and Betrayed the Reagan Legacy* (Doubleday, 2006).*