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## Lame Duck Obama Clinging to ObamaCare

By [Nat Hentoff](#)

The progressive fracturing of President Obama's credibility in the midterm election results was caused primarily by the grim economy and also by the widespread fear of ObamaCare - the rationing of our health care through government invasion of the doctor-patient relationship. This will be fully implemented by boards and commissions whose members have never seen those patients whose treatment is primarily government-funded - and often mandated.

If the Republican leadership of the House is unable to enact a veto-proof repeal of the core of ObamaCare within the next two years - and if he is re-elected in 2012 - here is what awaits many of us, in addition to already rising insurance premiums and more businesses no longer sharing payment of their employee's health care.

At increasing risk is not just the elderly deemed by this government to have already lived enough years to justify expensive continued treatment.

Cato Institute health expert Michael Tanner explains how the survival of ObamaCare can affect your survival, and mine, by deciding who "ultimately gets to make decisions about your life, about whether you're going to buy insurance or what kind of insurance you're going to buy (or be compelled by government to buy) what benefits it's going to have, what doctor you're going to see, what treatment that doctor's going to prescribe for you, what hospital you're going to go to, and how you're going to pay for it?"

In all of American history, this is the first time the national government will have the power to decide, in many cases, and a range of ages, how many of us will be permitted to go on living. Who will decide?

I expect that few of us, like many members of Congress, have actually read this law based on the Senate bill (2,409 pages) and the 153-page reconciliation package.

Moreover, I doubt that even many of Obama's citizen critics, including independent voters, know what was hidden beforehand in Obama's 2009 stimulus bill that includes the Federal Coordinating Council for Comparative Effectiveness Research (later superseded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute).

After being conceived in part by former Democratic senator Tom Daschle - who was to head Health and Human Services until his income-tax problems ushered him out of the federal government - ObamaCare's unelected council sets the operating framework for ObamaCare's health rationing.

Composed of 15 members appointed by the president, the Coordinating Council - along with the stimulus bill's additional National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (some of which may be ruled as too costly) - will review your doctor's diagnosis of the treatment for your condition with regard to the cost of government funds involved in that treatment.

There are, in addition, hordes of bureaucrats also involved in deciding your future on this Earth. As described by the firmly nonpolitical Congressional Research Service (Wall Street Journal, "ObamaCare, for some," October 29), there is "a currently unknowable number of new boards, commissions and offices" in this "bureaucratic apparatus."

Adds this report: "it is currently impossible to know how much influence they will ultimately have" on who will live or die (sorry, I meant "expire"), thereby helping the government cut its deficit.

Wait a minute!

How come the Obama administration - which, according to that irritating Constitution, works for we, the people who put it into office - will not name these new boards and commissions, their members, and, specifically, the powers each has over our futures?

Will the new Republican leadership of the House, and its sizable minority membership in the Senate - demand this vital information be provided to us? Isn't it up to us to insist they do this?

There is so much more we need to know. Ardentely defending Obamacare in the November 4 New York Times ("To save money, save the Health Care Act"), here is Peter Orszag (director of White House Office of Management and Budget, 2009-2010 and "distinguished visiting fellow" at the Council on Foreign Relations.) This is something I didn't know, and maybe neither did you. He writes:

"Perhaps most important, the legislation creates an Independent Payment Advisory Board, a panel of independent medical experts who will look for more ways to improve Medicare's cost-effectiveness (with regard to your health care). Under the law, any policy that the board issues takes effect unless legislation to block it is passed by Congress and signed by the president." That looks like the only way to block it. But even if the president vetoes this blocking legislation, the Board's rules still apply.

Can you believe this: There is no judicial review!

But what if Barack Obama is re-elected in 2012 and the Democrats take over the House and Senate - voting, as before, in lockstep with the president on Obamacare, therefore killing any opposition legislation to what this Independent Advisory Board has decided, and what all those other boards and commissions conclude your life is worth, whatever your own doctor wants to do for, and with you, personally?

Would this still be America? Is it now?

The president, after the "shellacking" (his word) he took in the midterm elections, said he would negotiate with the Republicans to "tweak" Obamacare but would not "re-litigate" arguments over its fundamentals (New York Times, October 4).

And at a press conference, Obama said of what he regards as his signature achievement, "I say to myself, 'this is the right thing to do.'"

Mr. President, in the midterms, a majority of millions of Americans told you exactly the opposite. And even some Democratic candidates ran away from Obamacare. So, as you stand shellacked but unyielding, will the new Republican House majority agree with the majority of the people and begin to strongly bring our health care back to each of us and our own doctors?

Whether we are Republicans or Democrats, this is a question we surely ought to ask each individual in the new House majority, since some of our very lives may depend on the answer. Start now and keep on the case. It's your case.

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