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Obamacare Sickens American Workers

Companies across the country drop insurance coverage and dump workers onto exchanges.

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Democrats landed on Earth to nurture working Americans. How ironic, then, that Obamacare is hammering U.S. laborers. From terminated coverage to truncated schedules, the Democrats' reputed constituency is paying dearly for Obama's massive, \$2.6 trillion health-care "reform."

"If you like your health-care plan, you will be able to keep your health-care plan. Period," Obama infamously claimed while peddling the so-called Affordable Care Act (ACA). "No one will take it away. No matter what." These words will trail Obama for life, just as "Read my lips: No new taxes" will mock Daddy Bush forever.

Companies — major and minor — have dropped workers from their health plans and dumped them onto Obamacare's exchanges, which sputtered to life on Tuesday.

- As *The Weekly Standard's* Ben Schachter reports, the insurer for the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the Dramatists Guild, and the Graphic Arts Guild announced: "All individual and/or Sole Proprietor Health Insurance will terminate January 1, 2014."
- "Provisions of the federal Affordable Care Act are projected to add \$7.3 million to the cost of the University [of Virginia] health plan in 2014 alone," *UVA Today* reported. "Starting Jan. 1, spouses who have access to coverage through their own employer will no longer be eligible for coverage under U.Va.'s plan."
- The 81-store Wegmans grocery chain will stop insuring employees who work between 20 and 30 hours per week.
- Trader Joe's CEO Dan Bane stated that employees who work fewer than 30 hours per week will receive a stipend and best wishes next year as they enter Obamacare's exchanges. "We believe that with the \$500 from Trader Joe's and the tax credits available under the ACA," Bane wrote his staffers, "many of you should be able to obtain health care coverage at very little if any net cost to you."
- To save some \$60 million annually, UPS will stop covering 15,000 spouses of non-union employees with access to insurance elsewhere. Higher medical expenses, "combined with the costs associated with the Affordable Care Act, have made it increasingly difficult to continue providing the same level of health care benefits to our employees at an affordable cost," a UPS memo explained.

In a *Market Watch* article titled “Why your boss is dumping your wife,” Jen Wiczner observes: “Next year, 12 percent of employers plan to exclude spouses, up from 4 percent this year, according to a recent Towers Watson survey.” Ball State University and pump-maker Flowserve are among those now hurling spouses overboard.

- Home Depot will subject some 20,000 part-timers to Obamacare. As spokesman Stephen Holmes told *The Daily Caller*, “Unfortunately, the ACA precludes us from offering the limited liability medical plan we’ve been offering the part-time associates.”

“Obamacare is going to kill off small business,” Home Depot founder Bernie Marcus warned last April. “Obamacare is the capper. That’s the bullet to the temple.”

- Securitas, America’s largest supplier of security guards, will ditch its low-cost coverage and direct 55,000 of its employees into Obamacare.

- Roughly 160,000 Walgreens drug-store employees will be driven into private-insurance exchanges.

Just like the stereotype of a banker-loving, secretary-hating greedy Republican, Obama postponed the employer mandate until 2015 while leaving the individual mandate intact. This has been good news in corporate boardrooms and bad news in company lunchrooms. In the *New York Post*, Cato Institute senior fellow Michael Tanner captured the immoral absurdity of Obama’s sop to the 1 percent: “Workers may now face a situation where they’ll be legally required to buy their own insurance or pay a penalty because their employers take advantage of the delay and don’t provide coverage.”

“We are hearing from our members who are concerned about what is happening with their companies,” Janna Pea of America’s Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union told *The Guardian*, London’s leading left-wing daily. “Not only are they looking at having their health-care coverage cut, they are also looking at less hours.”

Indeed, *Investor’s Business Daily’s* Jed Graham documents 313 employers who have cut workers’ hours, outsourced their positions, or simply eliminated them outright. So far — because assigning staffers to 30 or fewer hours spares employers from new penalties for not providing insurance — at least 30,377 Americans are working shorter shifts (if any), thanks to Obamacare.

IBD’s excellent coverage of this tragic trend, by definition, includes only cutbacks that generate headlines.

“No such list would be really ‘complete,’ because the information likely would have to be carried in the news for anyone to know about it,” explains health-policy scholar Merrill Matthews of the Institute for Policy Innovation in Dallas. “For example, a teller at a local branch of Bank of America told me that she was looking for another job about a month ago. When I asked why, she said that all of the full-time tellers were being switched to part time. I said, ‘Don’t tell me; let me guess — to under 30 hours?’”

“‘Yep,’ she said. She was too old (over 50) to have to work two part-time jobs. And no one will know about that because it isn’t in the news.”

So, Obama’s original lies notwithstanding, if you like your health plan, Obamacare can crush it. And if you like your full-time job, Obamacare can turn you into a part-timer — or just unemploy you.

Obamacare swiftly is becoming the biggest bait-and-switch in American history.