

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2016*

**Statement on the Sixth Anniversary of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act**

*March 22, 2016*

Just 6 years ago, the reality in our country was that millions of Americans were locked out of our health care system because they couldn't afford insurance or because they had preexisting conditions. Women were charged more than men simply because they were women. People who needed coverage the most were too often denied it.

At the same time, rising health care costs posed a significant threat to our economy, eroding workers' paychecks, and adding to our deficits. And while costs were high, the quality of care often wasn't.

The good news is, we've taken significant strides to change that. Tomorrow marks 6 years since I signed the Affordable Care Act into law. Thanks to this law, 20 million more Americans now know the security of having health insurance, and our uninsured rate is below 10 percent for the first time on record. As many as 129 million people with preexisting conditions can no longer be denied coverage or charged more as a result. Those with private insurance got an upgrade as well: Now almost 140 million Americans are guaranteed free preventive care, like certain cancer screenings and vaccines, and improvements in the quality of care in hospitals have averted 87,000 deaths since 2010.

We're also making historic investments to make sure our health care system puts patients first. We're paying doctors for what works, improving the safety and effectiveness of health care that patients receive. We're helping doctors and hospitals coordinate with each other by unlocking health data. And we're giving patients more information and tools to stay healthy.

Critics said this law would destroy jobs and cripple the economy, but in fact, just the opposite has happened. Our businesses have added jobs every single month since I signed it into law. The unemployment rate has dropped from almost 10 percent to 4.9 percent. Thanks in part to this law, health care prices have risen at the lowest rate in 50 years. Medicare is continuing a period of slow spending growth, saving taxpayers more than \$470 billion from 2009 to 2014 alone. And premiums for a family with job-based coverage are almost \$2,600 lower than if trends from the decade before the law had continued.

We've made good progress in the last 6 years. But we still have more work to do. We'll keep working to get more Americans covered and help the millions of people who remain uninsured in States that rejected the Medicaid expansion option. We'll keep working to make insurance and prescription drugs more affordable. And we'll keep working to reduce costs and improve the quality of care throughout our health system.

But the facts are clear: America is on a stronger footing because of the Affordable Care Act. Six years later, this is no longer just about a law. It's not about politics. It's about the recent college graduate who can stay on his parent's health insurance until he's 26. It's about the working mom who has coverage because her State expanded Medicaid. It's about the entrepreneur who has the freedom to pursue her dream and start that new business. After nearly a century of effort, and thanks to the thousands of people who fought so hard to pass and implement this law, we have at last succeeded in leaving our kids and grandkids a country

where preexisting conditions exclusions are a thing of the past, affordable options are within our reach, and health care is no longer a privilege, but a right.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, sixth anniversary.

*Subjects:* Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Health and medical care : Affordability and costs; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Health and medical care : Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD201600172.