Another Attack on Good Health Insurance

THIS QUARTER:

In the past quarter, the Goodman Institute held its first annual awards dinner, presenting the Antony Fisher Award to Texas governor Greg Abbott. The institute also made considerable progress uniting almost all right-of-center think tanks behind a set of pro-free enterprise health reforms.

Obamacare has transformed the individual health insurance market into one where people face extraordinarily high premiums, high deductibles and narrow provider networks.

For example, the average premium for an individual in 2020 was $7,100 and the average deductible was $4,364. That means the average individual (not getting a subsidy) had to pay more than $11,000 before getting any benefits from his or her health plan.

The quickest, easiest way to solve the Obamacare problems of outrageously high deductibles and provider networks that deny people access to the care they need is called "short-term insurance." Traditionally, these were 12-month plans that filled a gap when people moved from job to job, school to work, etc. Where they are not regulated, these plans tend to give people the insurance they want, not what bureaucrats think they should have.
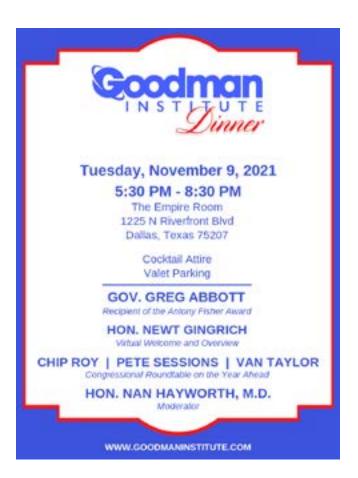
The Obama administration, however, limited these plans by executive order to three months' duration and no renewals. Trump reversed course – allowing 12 months' duration and renewals for up to three years.

Plus, as John Goodman explained last year at *Forbes*, Trump allowed a second type of insurance that linked together the three year periods – allowing indefinite coverage.

Under Trump's rules, short-term insurance is potentially a free market alternative to Obamacare and enrollment has been growing by leaps and bounds. Unfortunately, President Biden is now threatening to return us the Obama-era rules.

As Dr. Goodman explained last week at *Forbes*, there is much that state governments can do to reform health care, if only federal bureaucrats would stay out of the way.

Goodman Institute Awards Dinner

At its first annual awards dinner in Dallas, the Goodman Institute presented the Antony Fisher Award to Texas governor Greg Abbott, presented the institute's outline for a Health Contract with America, and hosted a congressional roundtable with one former member and two current members of Congress. Newt Gingrich gave an introduction, greatly appreciated by the 200 or so guests attending the celebration.

Antony Fisher Award

Sir Antony Fisher was a British businessman who founded the Institute for Economic Affairs in London, an organization that became the source of many reforms implemented by Margaret Thatcher.

Based on that highly successful experiment, Fisher went around the world establishing as many as three dozen think tanks. They included the Manhattan Institute in New York City, the Fraser Institute in Canada, and Hernando de Soto's Institute for Liberty and Democracy in Peru.

The result was a network of organizations that worked with each other, learned from each other and promoted free market ideas – including privatization, deregulation and tax reform.

For example, in 1984 Madsen Pirie (Adam Smith Institute in London) and John Goodman (National Center for Policy Analysis in Dallas) brought Margaret Thatcher's techniques of privatization to the United States through two books and a Washington, DC, conference for other think tanks. These and other activities led to a privatization revolution in this country.

In 1990, a Goodman-led task force report on school choice spurred heath-insurance magnate Pat Rooney to start the nation's first private school voucher program. State think tanks around the country soon took up the cause and what followed was an explosion of private vouchers and charter schools throughout the country.

The Antony Fisher Award is given to an individual who exemplifies the values and the vision of Sir Antony – through words, deeds and example, and who shares his vision that a good society is one with free individuals, free markets and limited government.

Dallas business executive Brint Ryan presents the Antony Fisher Award to Gov. Greg Abbott

Gov. Greg Abbott

Governor Abbott received the Antony Fisher Award for his commendable efforts to protect individual rights in Texas. These include:

- The right to work
- The right to learn
- The right to vote

Governor Abbott resisted the prolonged lockdown practices of other states, and the booming Texas economy is the result. Texas

GIPPR board chair Leigh Curry talks with board member Coley Clark

Rep. Pete Sessions and Rep. Chip Roy giving their prognosis for the coming year

Former congresswoman Nan Hayworth chairs the Congressional Roundtable

has added more than 1 million new jobs during his administration. He encouraged our schools to reopen so that children could attend in person and enhance their learning experience with a minimum of restrictions. Because of his leadership, voting reforms in Texas have made it easier to vote and harder to cheat.

Health Contract with America

John Goodman reported that he has been working with Newt Gingrich and more than 70 right-of-center think tanks and research organizations on detailed recommendations for right-of-center health reform. Based on details contained in a Consensus Group document called *Health Care Choices*, Goodman is promoting a Health Contract, similar to the Contract with America promoted by Newt Gingrich 27 years ago.

Among the promises:

- Let families have access to insurance that meets their medical and financial needs, without unaffordable deductibles and sky-high premiums.

- Let families have access to the best doctors and the best hospitals, instead of narrow networks that deny them the care they need.

- Let employees have access to personal and portable health insurance that travels with them from job to job and in and out of the labor market.

Congressional Roundtable

Former congresswoman Nan Hayworth led a roundtable discussion with Rep. Chip Roy and Rep. Pete Sessions. John Goodman also joined in the discussion.

Among the questions addressed: Will Republicans retake the Congress in next year's election? Why don't Republicans have an agenda, in case they do retake the Congress? Is cooperation with Democrats impossible?

Outreach

The Goodman Institute sponsored the opening reception at the fall meeting of the Philadelphia Society in Fort Worth in October.

In November, John Goodman reunited with his coauthor, *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer and Fox News analyst Kimberly Strassel, in Dallas. He also met with Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

John Goodman and Kimberly Strassel are coauthors of Leaving Women Behind: Modern Families and Outdated Laws

Florida governor DeSantis is widely viewed as a potential presidential candidate in 2024

Kotlikoff's New Book

Most people are really bad at personal financial planning. Among the mistakes: they save too little or they save too much; they buy the wrong amount of life insurance; they leave great sums of Social Security benefits on the table; they pay more in taxes than they should, etc.

The people who make these mistakes are not just ordinary folks. They include highly educated, sophisticated people – including virtually all economists and Wall Street analysts. They almost certainly include you, the reader.

So why do so many people get so many things wrong? Because financial planning is very, very complicated. To pick one example, Social Security has 2,728 rules governing 13 benefits. And the agency is unforgiving. It doesn't give you money back once you discover your past mistakes.

Because financial planning is so difficult, most people make really important decisions without knowing the true costs of the choices they are making. Getting married, getting divorced, deciding to have another child, quitting work to go back to school, retiring early – and these aren't small decisions. They're big ones.

Fortunately, help is at hand. Goodman Institute scholar Lawrence Kotlikoff has written a must-read book that has valuable information for just about everybody.