Healthcare Reform Policy

Student’s Name

Institution

Date

In ensuring that citizens gain access to quality services in healthcare, the U.S. government decided to implement the healthcare reform policy. The most significant healthcare reform policy is etched in The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which is also referred to as The Affordable Care Act.

This healthcare reform policy was signed into law on March 23, 2010, by President Obama (Blumenthal, Abrams, & Nuzum, 2015). However, the process was long and could be traced back to July 2009 when Nancy Pelosi, House Speaker and a several Democrats from the House of Representatives, who had a plan to overhaul the country’s health-care system. The Democrats believed that the country’s healthcare system needed change to ensure the acquisition of affordable healthcare (eHealth, 2018). However, the process nearly failed after the death of Ted Kennedy, the Massachusetts Senator who had a leading role in the reform, thus subjecting the Senate Democrats to jeopardy. However, the appointment of Paul Kirk, a Democrat, revived the hopes of achieving the intended reform, although the entire process was being opposed, particularly by the Republican side. In December 2009, 39 Republicans voted against the implementation of the bill, while Jim Bunning, a Republic Senator refused to vote (eHealth, 2018).

Furthermore, in January 2010, Scott Brown, a Republican candidate won the Massachusetts’ special election to replace Democrat Ted Kennedy’s last term (eHealth, 2018). This win meant that the Senate did not have the 60th vote required for the passing of the bill. On March 11, 2010, the Senate Democrats formulated how they could employ the budget reconciliation as a method to propel the bill in the absence of the 60th vote. The budget reconciliation formulation would necessitate 51 Senators to support the bill through a vote for it to be signed into law by the President. On March 21, 2010, the bill gets a 219-212 vote in the House, with 34 Democrats and all Republicans voting against it (eHealth, 2018). However, on March 23, 2010, President Obama signs into law the Affordable Care Act (Blumenthal, Abrams, & Nuzum, 2015).

The Affordable Care Act is involved in ensuring that more people could access healthcare. After the implementation of the healthcare reform policy, the rate of uninsured citizens dropped from 43 percent to 9.1 percent between 2010 and 2015 respectively (Obama, 2016). These statistics indicate the significant role played by the ACA Act in promoting quality healthcare access.

It can be argued that without access to quality healthcare, citizens may be limited to working for the betterment of their lives and country. When workers are sick, the productivity of firms is affected due to absenteeism (Zhang, Sun, Woodcock, & Anis, 2017). Therefore, the healthcare reform can be said to play a critical role in ensuring the country’s productivity is not affected by ailments and unnecessary absenteeism in the workplaces. Additionally, it is comprehensive and inclusive enough to assist all people regardless of race, religion, or any cultural background (Blumenthal, Abrams, & Nuzum, 2015).

Furthermore, the healthcare reform policy has been chosen because of the way it intends to tackle unfavorable health outcomes. It is worth noting that uninsured individuals may be limited in the acquisition of sufficient medical care and may also be disadvantaged such that they only receive less timely care (Blumenthal, Abrams, & Nuzum, 2015). Moreover, the health outcomes of people without health insurance are poor compared to those with insurance. The reduction in health outcomes is because of the elevated costs of accessing healthcare particularly without insurance (Blumenthal, Abrams, & Nuzum, 2015). Since the policy intends to reduce such challenges, it has been deemed important and hence, its choice in this paper.

References

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