

Telehealth Equity By Iza Choudrey

Introduction

- U.S. healthcare system is fragmented.
- The COVID-19 Pandemic has progressed the healthcare struggle.
- Telehealth usage has drastically increased since the start of the pandemic.

What is Telehealth?

According to HRSA, telehealth is defined as “the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health and health administration.”

Pros

- Expands access & care
- Patient Convenience
- Reducing COVID-19

Thesis It is evident that telehealth is beneficial as it provides convenience from the comfort of one’s home. However, there are hidden challenges when it comes to telehealth and bridging the gap in terms of pre-existing health disparities from tackling language barriers, digital literacy barriers, and internet barriers. While telehealth has its benefits and ability to bridge the gap, it is not yet accessible for all as.

Pre-Existing Barriers that Telehealth is not equipped for yet:

*Patients with limited English proficiency (LEP) are struggling, leading to lower rates of telehealth use. These patients show trends in receiving lower quality care from satisfaction to understand treatment plans.

*Effort is needed greatly by medical professionals in providing for some sort of digital device as well as teaching patients how to use the devices. The issue arises of how willing medical professionals would go to remotely help patients in downloading software, exploring emails, etc. as many lack digital literacy skills.

*While telehealth is a great added benefit to rural areas, as individuals do not have to travel great lengths to seek medical care, it is not yet plausible. Without well access to broadbands and reliance on internet connection, these individuals do not have the necessary tools to properly engage in telehealth.

Conclusion

An unintended consequence of telehealth is that these new processes end up changing the previous structure of traditional healthcare which leads to structural disturbance. This leads to the continuance of healthcare disparities, rather than the closing of the gap.

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT



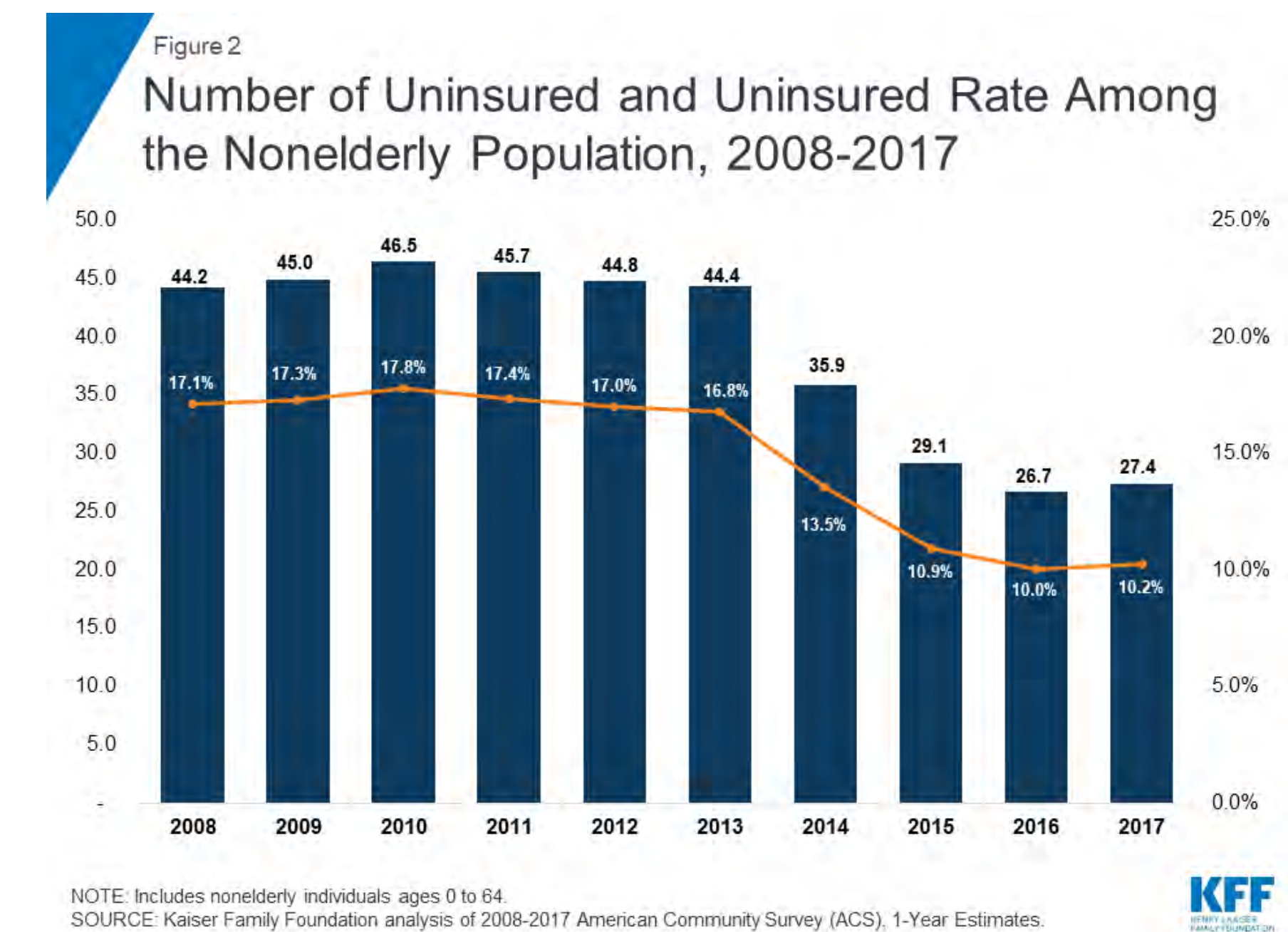
Has the the ACA been effective in impacting health outcomes?

Healthcare In America

- In 2019 The United States spent nearly 3.65 trillion dollars on healthcare, more than any other developed nation
- The healthcare industry made over 2 billion dollars in revenue in 2019
- Despite the expenditures of the government on healthcare and the money that the industry makes, 30 million Americans are uninsured and over 40 million Americans are underinsured.
- Healthcare has become a very politically divided, partisan issue in America with both sides of the political spectrum pushing for reforms.

The Affordable Care Act

- The Affordable Care, also known as Obamacare was passed in 2010 and is one of the biggest healthcare legislatures ever passed
- The ACA had 3 main goals: (1) get more people health insurance (2) improve the quality of healthcare (3) reduce the costs of healthcare



Outcomes of The Affordable Care Act (Positive & Negative)

PROS-

- The ACA has increased coverage for particularly women, minorities and working class people/families.
- The ACA allowed dependents, up until the age of 26 to be covered which increased coverage
- The ACA is monumental for reproductive health because it stated that birth control was to be covered by insurance
- It made sure a person with pre-existing health conditions could not be denied insurance

CONS-

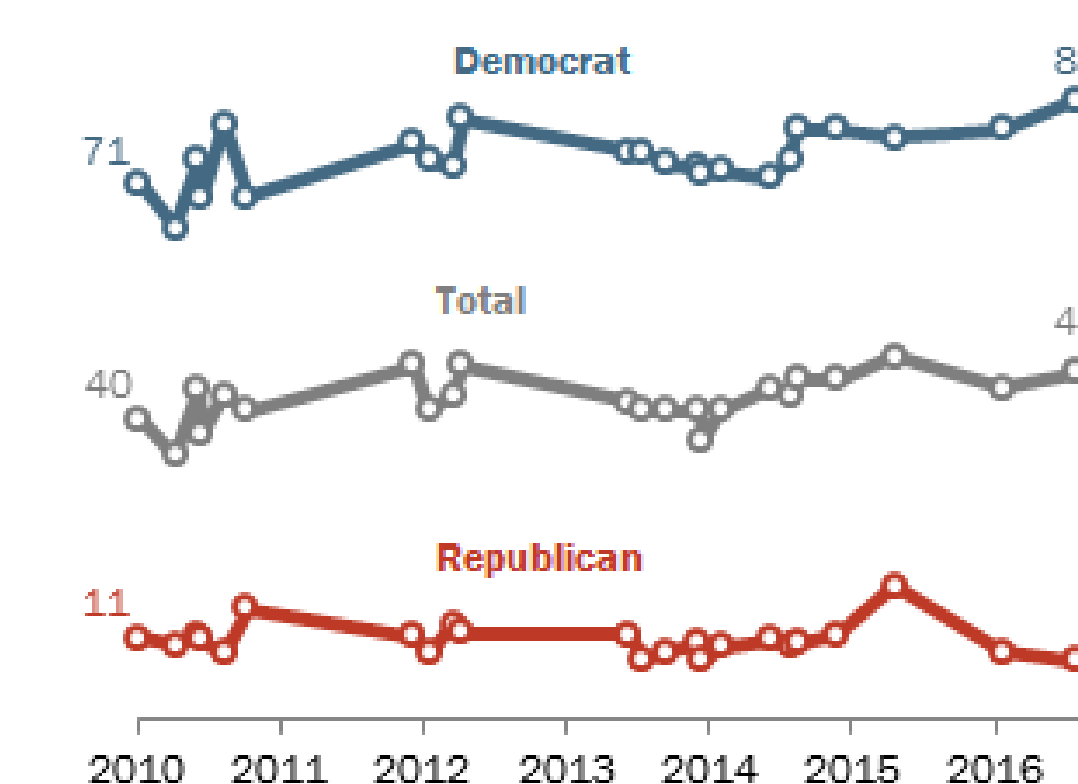
- It can be argued that the success of the ACA was very state specific. For example many red states did not see much increase in coverage due to the state governments not expanding medicaid
- Although more people may have been insured, it can be argued that the quality of the healthcare was not guaranteed.
- There is a lack of price transparency which makes it harder for patients to make decisions regarding options for treatments/hospitals, etc.

The Future Of Healthcare In America

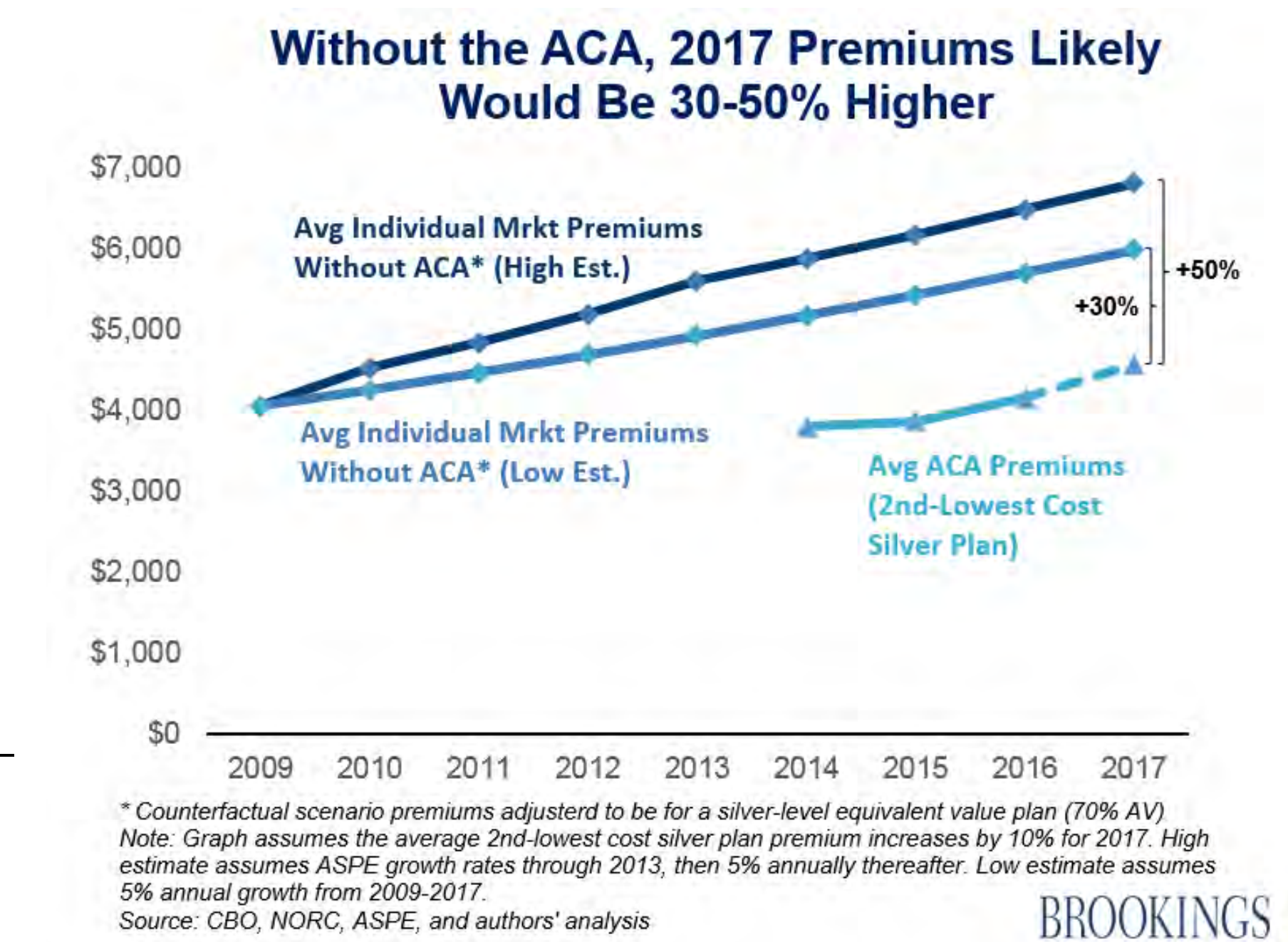
- Healthcare is as relevant of an issue as ever especially in light of the COVID pandemic. Recently there has been a rise in support for universal health coverage and "Medicare For All" which has been advocated for by politicians such as Senator Bernie Sanders, Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. This means instead of relying on insurance companies, people would receive healthcare provided by the government.

Republicans, Democrats hold opposing views on the Affordable Care Act

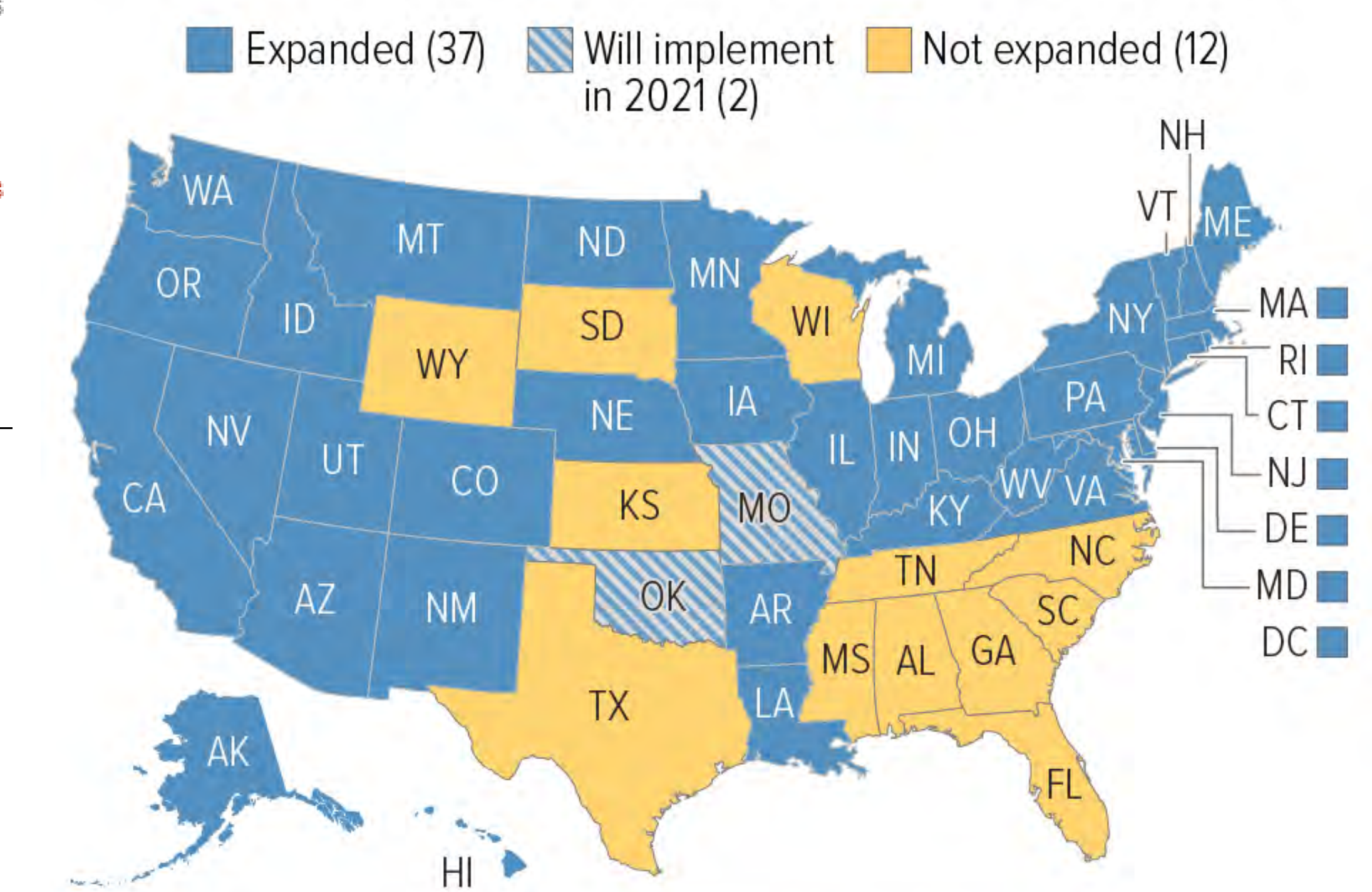
% who approve of the 2010 health care law ...



Source: Survey conducted Oct. 20-25, 2016.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Status of State Medicaid Expansion in 2021



HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY: RETAIL HEALTH CLINICS

Zoja Misut

GROWTH OF INDUSTRY

Retail health clinics provide health care services to minor problems.

Costs are minimal, and most convenient care.

Operated differently in different states and stores.

VACCINES

Leading force is vaccination delivery due to advertisement and convenience.

"Vaccinations were administered at 1,952,610 visits, up from 469,330 visits ... 39.9%, 36.4%, and 42.0% of total visits in 2007, 2008, and 2009, respectively."

-Uscher-Pines, Lori et al. "The Growth of Retail Clinics in Vaccination Delivery in the U.S." American journal of preventive medicine 43.1 (2012): 63–66. Web.



COMPETITION

The race to produce more quality and quantity service is apparent among the private companies.

Most prominent: CVS vs. Walgreens

"CVS (7600 stores) and Walgreens (8200 stores) compete neck and neck... (On June 15, CVS announced it would pay \$1.9 billion to purchase 1600 pharmacies in 47 states and some 80 medical clinics, all of which are located in Target stores, and rebrand them as CVS facilities.)"

-Iglehart, John K. "The Expansion of Retail Clinics — Corporate Titans Vs. Organized Medicine." The New England journal of medicine 373.4 (2015): 301–303. Web.

CHALLENGING THE TRADITIONAL

Concerns from the AARP, AMA, AAP that clinics challenge primary physicians' offices.

Services are extremely convenient compared to regular doctors.

LOCATIONS

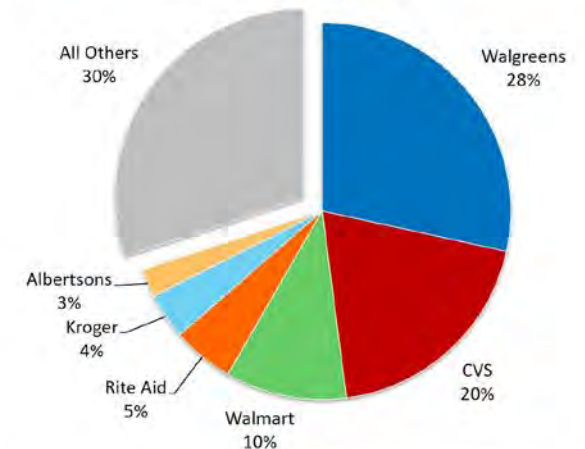
Disproportionately in high population areas, and high-income communities.

About 2000 open across America and more than half are Minute Clinic from CVS

Walgreens
healthcare clinic

340B Contract Pharmacy Locations, by Company, 2020

n = 27,928 pharmacy locations



Source: Drug Channels Institute analysis of OPA Daily Contract Pharmacy Database. Data show number of unique contract pharmacy locations as of July 1, 2020. Company totals are computed from combined banners (store names) in the database.

Published on Drug Channels (www.DrugChannels.net) on July 14, 2020.

Health Care and Human Rights in the United States

BY NICOLE PALMETTO

INTRODUCTION

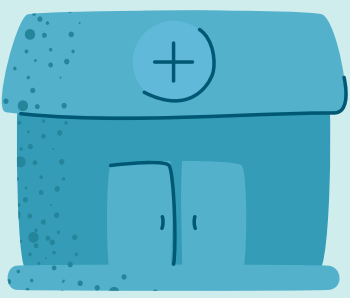
Although the United States is a high-income country, over 30 million people are uninsured. If a Human Rights-Based Framework for implementing Health Care were put into place, the United States would adopt a comprehensive health care system more efficiently.

According to UCLA's Fielding School of Public Health, the United States is one of 86 countries whose constitutions do not guarantee their citizen's health protection of any capacity.



WHAT IS A HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH CARE?

A human rights-based approach to health care ensures the indivisibility of civil and socio-economic rights to create agency in establishing protections for said rights, in the case of my paper, health care.

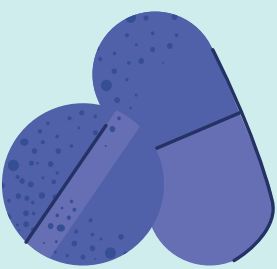


IS THERE PROOF THIS APPROACH IS SUCCESSFUL?

For almost 20 years, Thailand has made incredible achievements in ensuring affordable health care for all. Rwanda, Brazil, Mexico, and Bangladesh, to name a few, have made significant advances in their health care system and health care outcomes by guiding their decisions based on human rights.

The United States spends the most on health care, yet the country scores among the worst health outcomes out of high income countries.

PROS AND CONS OF USING A HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH



Cons include longer wait times for health care, the possibility of increasing the US debt, and exhausting the primary care physician shortage. Pros include the possibility of lowering costs of health care, saving more lives, increasing economic productivity and joining the countries that actively support the internationally recognized right to health care.

IMPORTANCE

A human rights-based approach to health care is vital in improving health indicators in the United States and ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity of obtaining inexpensive quality health care.