



# Retiring doctors mean problems for newly insured under ObamaCare

By Jim Angle

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Some 10,000 baby boomers will retire every day for the next 19 years, including many doctors. But at the same time, more people will be looking for health providers under ObamaCare -- meaning there could be a potentially wide numbers gap between those seeking treatment and those available to provide it.

Dr. Jeff Cain, President of the American Academy of Family Physicians, explains, "we have an increasing population, we have more Americans that are getting older that need more health care. And with the 30 million Americans that are newly insured with the affordable health care act, more people are looking for primary care."

In fact, medical colleges predict a huge shortage -- of more than 90,000 physicians by 2020 and a whopping 130,000 or more by 2025.

Not only that, Cain notes, "almost a third of family doctors in rural America are thinking about retiring in the next five years."

Avik Roy of the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, a conservative think tank, adds that on top of retiring baby boomer physicians, "there are a lot of doctors who are just so frustrated; today with all the bureaucracy involved in taking care of patients that they're retiring early."

Dr. Ramin Oskoui, president of the medical staff at Sibley Hospital in Washington, says "one of the great misconceptions about ObamaCare is that just because you have health insurance, you'll therefore get adequate health care and you'll have access to it. I think nothing could be further from the truth."

The health care law did set aside \$900 million in scholarships for primary care workers and \$230 million to increase medical residents, nurses and physician assistants, especially nurses.

The president praised the role of nurses recently and said, "there's a lot of stuff they can do in a way that, frankly, is cheaper than having a doctor do it, but the outcomes are just as good."

Those efforts will create 1700 new primary care workers by 2015, but analysts argue that won't be nearly enough.

John Goodman of the National Center for Policy Analysis in Dallas points to Massachusetts as an example, noting that "in Boston right now, where they say have universal coverage, the wait for a patient to see a new doctor is two months and that's the longest wait in the whole country.";

Sen. John Barrasso, R-WY, who is also a doctor, argues "the health care law put a lot of money into hiring more IRS agents to enforce the law, but not that same kind of focus on training more doctors and nurses and others to take care of patients."

Several states have passed laws to let nurses and physician assistants play a larger role, although the American Medical Association opposes such moves.

But those efforts won't produce tens of thousands of doctors to confront the tsunami of retiring baby boomers and the newly insured under ObamaCare.

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