



# Listen up, Washington: Reduce the rules

By Bela Pandit, M.D. | December 15, 2016



*When it comes to healthcare policy, this is a time of both turmoil and opportunity. It's also a time for the stakeholders to speak. As Washington mulls the status of the Affordable Care Act and priorities for the future, athenaInsight asked physicians and healthcare executives to share their advice.*

What is to become of the Affordable Care Act? Complete repeal would leave millions un-insured. But the law, as it stands, can be counterproductive – or worse.

As a specialist, I have seen many patients whose premiums have skyrocketed – sometimes to almost double what they paid the previous year – and who also face huge deductibles. They are struggling to pay for insurance they never use for its intended purpose. They are essentially paying out of pocket for everything.

On the physician side, we are struggling to be compliant with the never-ending rules, regulations, and reporting. The implementation of MACRA is

yet another way for physicians to spend more time charting notes and less time on patient care and practicing actual medicine.

This leads to earlier and higher physician burnout. It could also lead doctors to provide care based on reporting measures – rather than the problems at hand – for fear of being monetarily penalized. There will be an increase of falsified information, more physicians opting out of participating in Medicare/Medicaid, and eventually fewer doctors practicing and fewer students entering medicine.

Meanwhile, healthcare technology companies are spending astronomical resources trying to prepare for all intended changes that may or may not occur. This distracts from the use of technology that actually aids the practice and progression of patient care.

Recently, I spent a day spent on Capitol Hill with a wide variety of passionate physicians speaking with representatives and their staff members. This is an uncertain and transitional time in Washington, and in every office, you could sense the trepidation and exhilaration that come with change.

This change could be good, as long as it accomplishes what healthcare truly needs: ensuring that patients receive high-quality care from doctors using the best technology, without threat to their reimbursement or their sense of self.

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