

April 2018



Judy Feder

Professor of Public Policy at Georgetown University and a Public Health Scholar

Dr. Judy Feder is a widely published health policy scholar and a professor of public policy at Georgetown University. She is one of the nation's leaders in health policy--most particularly, in efforts to understand and improve the nation's health insurance system. Dr. Feder played a key role in shaping national health policy as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services during the Clinton Administration.

Together with Sheila Burke, she is co-chair of the study panel on long-term care at the National Academy of Social Insurance, of which she is a founding member. From 1999 to 2008, she served as dean of the Georgetown Public Policy Institute

Subject Area/Topic: THE STATE OF THE UNITED STATES?

Highlights: Introducing her talk, Dr. Feder noted that she had been asked to focus on two issues—the current status of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and policy prospects relating to long-term care. “My quick take on the ACA is how amazingly resilient and effective its policies have been—despite enormous political controversy.

The primary focus of the ACA was to expand coverage to many of those who were left out of the health insurance marketplace. Specifically, this addressed (1) able-bodied adults without children who had been excluded from Medicaid regardless of how poor and (2) the health insurance market for those who were not eligible for an employer-sponsored plan. (Insurers limited coverage in this group to people who were healthy.) The ACA's Medicaid expansion and new marketplaces successfully brought coverage to 20 million individuals.

The ACA is surviving in spite of debilitating actions by the White House and the Republican-controlled Senate and House. Republican efforts to repeal and replace the ACA have failed and the structure remains in place and can be rebuilt.

Dr. Feder is far less optimistic about apolitical change that would enhance the prospect of government support for public insurance that would support long-term care—that is, help with bathing, dressing, eating and other needs of people who can't manage on their own. This is not just a problem of the elderly. Approximately 40% of those who need long-term care are under 65. While she believes that there is a great need for government action, this is not a high priority concern for most of the public or for most Congressmen and Senators.