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Karen Pollitz

Senior Fellow at the Kaiser Family Foundation

Karen Pollitz is a Senior Fellow at the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF). She works on the Program for the Study of Health Reform and Private Insurance, tracking implementation of private market reforms with a focus on consumer protections.

Prior to joining the Foundation, she worked at the US Department of Health and Human Services on national health reform (2010-2011 and 1993-1997) and directed research on private health insurance at the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute.

She has a Master's Degree in Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley, and a BA from Oberlin College.

Subject Area/Topic: Implementing OBAMACARE: Progress and Problems

Highlights: Ms. Pollitz briefly summarized key provisions of the Act and then discussed implementation issues. The Affordable Care Act.

While the Supreme Court ruled that the Affordable Care Act was constitutional, it also ruled that the Medicaid expansion provision was optional for States. As a result, many states (particularly those in the south and mid-west) have decided against Medicaid expansion. Currently, 25 states and the District of Columbia are expanding Medicaid, 4 are debating the matter and 21 are not expanding.

Sixteen states and the District of Columbia have established Health Insurance Exchanges, seven have partnerships with the Federal government and 27 have federally operated exchanges. She opined that more of the states that have so far rejected Medicaid expansion will change their minds, given the health Federal subsidies involved. Pollitz described the current non-group health insurance marketplace as dysfunctional.

While surveys show that the American public likes many aspects of the Affordable Care Act, opinions on the Act split along partisan lines with most Democrats in favor and most Republicans opposed. Thus, the stalemate in Congress and the very mixed welcome in the states. Republican-leaning media are spreading a great deal of misinformation to the public.