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# Improper Enrollment In Medicaid Soars



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Policy



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Conversations about serious issues like health reform have been taking a back seat to impeachment hearings that dominated Washington's attention this week. Health care didn't even take top billing in the Democratic presidential debate on Wednesday.

Does this mean that the left is regrouping after being hammered by critics both inside and outside the party over the various Medicare for All designs?

Perhaps.

Elizabeth Warren [backpedaled](#) this week, now saying she is going to start out with a “robust public option” and then, after “the American people will have experienced the full benefits of a true Medicare for all option,” push for full government control of the health sector in year three of her presidency “when public support will be stronger.”

Sigh.

We don't have space here to go into all the reasons why this is so completely unrealistic. But it does show that the American people may be catching on to the reality of the scheme.

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**A new government report came out** this week showing how wasteful and expensive government programs are.

Galen's Brian Blase, now a regular contributor to *The Wall Street Journal*, [teamed up](#) with Cato's Aaron Yelowitz to analyze a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services report about improper spending in Medicaid.

Turns out the share of recipients who are enrolled in Medicaid but who do not meet eligibility criteria has grown sharply since Medicaid expansion began in 2014—when the Obama administration stopped auditing enrollment eligibility.

The [CMS report](#) shows “high levels of observed eligibility errors.”

Improper spending in the Medicaid program more than tripled in 2019, pointing to misuse of the program since it was dramatically expanded under Obamacare, Blase and Yelowitz find.

Because of the perverse incentive in the ACA's, states see Medicaid expansion as a cash cow and have generally failed to conduct their own eligibility reviews. One HHS audit found that more than half of sampled enrollees in California's Medicaid program were either improperly enrolled or potentially improperly enrolled.

**Nonetheless, Democratic leaders are undeterred** in their opposition to private health insurance choices. They held a news conference this week decrying short-term, limited-duration health plans and calling them “junk plans,” something I heard in [my multiple congressional testimonies](#) earlier this year. They want to shut down one of the only affordable options for health coverage available to people who simply can’t pay the outrageous premiums for Obamacare policies.

The Trump Administration, under Brian’s leadership, produced a rule allowing these policies to be renewable for up to three years, and they can be a lifeline for struggling families. One single dad with two sons told me that he no longer could afford premium for the ACA-qualified plan he once had. He dropped the coverage but wanted to make sure his boys were covered so he bought a short-term plan.

Some time later, one of his sons contracted leukemia, and the plan has paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for his care. He says he doesn’t know where he would be without the short-term plan and can’t understand why anyone would call this coverage “junk.”

Nonetheless, too many states are limiting the plans to only three months—as the Obama administration had done, denying their citizens this coverage option.

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