

March 23, 2010, President Obama signed historic health care legislation into law following a year-long struggle with congress to follow through on what was a pivotal piece of his administration's domestic policy agenda.

"I am signing this bill for all the leaders who took up this cause through the generations," said the President, "from Teddy Roosevelt to Franklin Roosevelt, from Harry Truman to Lyndon Johnson ..."

But what does it mean? What Obama signed may not include all the provisions and changes you think it does. Many alterations have been made along the way and, at this point, many Americans are unsure of exactly what the AHCA Act entails.

What changes are slated for 2010? The "immediate" changes include extending the length of time a child can remain on his/her parents' plan – through age 26 (ending on the child's 27th birthday).¹ Also, children can no longer be denied coverage due to pre-existing conditions, and policies can no longer be rescinded by insurers when a person becomes ill (unless fraud or misrepresentation is proven).³

What changes are slated for the future? Some of the most sweeping reforms won't take effect for a few years. The "biggie" that has everyone buzzing involves required health care insurance. Beginning in 2014, Americans (except those with religious objections, inmates and Native Americans) will be required to have health insurance coverage ... or face an annual penalty.³

And what about taxes? The other "biggie" getting buzz involves a new tax which starts in 2013 – a 3.8% tax on investment income for individuals earning more than \$200,000 and households earning more than \$250,000.⁶

Where can you get more information? The white house has provided a website. You can visit whitehouse.gov/healthreform to find out how the Act will impact you.

Is it settled? Nope. Amendments to the bill have already been proposed, and Attorney Generals from 14 states have filed a lawsuit claiming the new bill is unconstitutional.⁴ Justice Department spokesman Charles Miller, however, is "confident that this statute is constitutional".⁵

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Citations.

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