The First Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1912 - 1917

1912: President Theodore Roosevelt campaigned as a Progressive Party candidate promoting the idea of National Health Care Insurance

Although President Theodore Roosevelt lost the election, Progressives continued to push for National Health Care Insurance for several years.

1912-1916: The states of Massachusetts, New York, and California all introduced health insurance legislation in their states.

1916: Congress held hearings on a federal plan for health benefits that were advocated by the American Association of Labor.

1917: The proposal was defeated by a powerful alliance of medical and business organizations as the nation focused on WWI.
The Second Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1932 - 1938

1920’s: American concerns over the rising cost of Health Care increased

1930’s: During the Great Depression many American families used approximately 1/3 of the annual income on health care costs

1932: A Government committee known as the Wilbur Commission reported that millions of people were unable to afford adequate health care and recommended health care reforms

1934: President Franklin D. Roosevelt brain trust devoted some time discussing the feasibility of a National health Insurance Program

By 1938: Strong opposition from the American Medical Association led FDR to focus on the Social Security Act instead of NHI
The Third Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1945 - 1950

1944: FDR put National Health Insurance back on his legislative agenda in his State of the Union Speech

1945: President Harry S. Truman proposed a compulsory plan for comprehensive NHI

He called on Congress to initiate a 10 year plan to transform the existing Health Care System into one with compulsory coverage for all Americans

NHI was to be administered through the Social Security Program and incorporated into the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill in Congress

The American Medical Association warned Americans against such "socialized medicine" that would "turn physicians into slaves"
The Third Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1945 - 1950

President Truman attempted to reassure Americans that the program would not be socialist in nature. He promised that “people would get medical and hospital services just as they do now” without a rise in costs or restrictions on medical physicians.

By 1950: The Truman Administration and Congress were forced to turn their attention to the Korean Conflict and away from National Health Care issues.

The American Medical Association led a well-funded campaign to promote expansion of voluntary health service as an alternative.

By 1951: The NHI legislation stalled in Congress, while some 77 million U.S. residents purchased voluntary health insurance.
The Fourth Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1962 - 1968

1962: President John F. Kennedy made a televised speech advocating legislation to provide Health Benefits to Social Security recipients

“This bill serves the public interest. It involves the Government because it involves the public welfare”

Unfortunately, once again, the new legislation stalled in Congress

1965: President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation creating the Medicare & Medicaid programs to provide comprehensive healthcare for those 65 years and older (poor, blind, & disabled too)

By 1968: These new government programs caused U.S. healthcare costs and spending to skyrocket
The Fifth Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1971 - 1976

1971: President Richard M. Nixon backed a plan requiring employers to provide a minimum level of health insurance for their workers or a federal health care tax for insurance. The plan would also place a ceiling on out-of-pocket expenses and eliminate exclusions from insurance based on pre-existing medical conditions.

1973: Senator Edward M. “Ted” Kennedy sponsored the Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) Act to create a health reform plan directed & financed entirely by the federal government. Once again, the American Medical Association went against both plans and proposed their own Medicredit.
The Fifth Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1971 - 1976

These three proposals generated furious debates between liberals and conservatives in Congress.

Liberals considered Nixon’s plan to be more beneficial to the insurance industry than the American people.

Conservatives were concerned that Senator Kennedy’s plan would give the government too big of a role in the Health Care Industry.

Soon the situation in Vietnam and the Watergate Scandal caused Nixon’s proposal to lose both political and popular support.

Meanwhile, Sen. Kennedy’s HMO passed after making a compromise requiring co-payments of $25 and an annual cap of $1,000.
The Fifth Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1971 - 1976

The success of Senator Kennedy’s HMO Act marked the beginning of a career long effort to overhaul the nation’s health care system.

When Jimmy Carter was elected President in 1976, he called for “a comprehensive National Health Insurance system with universal and mandatory coverage” for all Americans.

Unfortunately for President Carter, the Nation soon fell into a deep recession due to the Middle East Oil Embargo.

Once again Health Care was forced to the “Back Burner” of Congressional Concerns for another decade.
The Sixth Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1985 - 1988

In 1985: Senator Edward “Ted” Kennedy used his legislative skills to help push through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act in Congress (Better known as COBRA).

COBRA mandated that insurance programs give some employees the ability to keep paying for health coverage through their group health plan for up to 18 months after losing their job.

In 1986: Congress passed the Emergency Medical Treatment Act which required hospitals to stabilize all emergency-room patients regardless of their ability to pay for treatment.

Although President Ronald Reagan had opposed Medicare stating that it was “the first step toward a government takeover of medicine,” he did support some limited efforts to improve healthcare coverage.
In 1988: President Reagan signed the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act (MCCA) into law.

It was designed to protect older Americans from financial ruin due to lengthy disability of illness.

However, MCCA was financed entirely by a surtax imposed on the nation’s 33 million Medicare beneficiaries and set limits on medical benefits.

Within a few months, hundreds of thousands of American Senior Citizens grew resentful over having to pay a surtax for a program that duplicated benefits many of them already received.

By Dec 1989: Congress overwhelmingly repealed the MCCA after large numbers of protestors complained to their local Congressmen.
The Seventh Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1993 - 1997

Health care reform re-emerged during the 1992 Presidential elections as Bill Clinton promoted an idea to reorganize the American Healthcare system.

President Clinton appointed his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, as chairperson of the Health Care Task Force.

The task force was made up of members from the Insurance and Business industries chiefly responsible for the existing problems in America’s Health Care System.

Proceedings were held behind closed doors with little input from Health Care Professionals or members of the Public Policy Community.

1993: After months of heated controversy among the Task Force members, the American Health Security Act emerged in Congress.
The Seventh Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1993 - 1997

The Clinton Health Care Plan Proposal

It called for universal coverage, with all employers required to contribute toward the costs of insurance premiums for their workers.

Americans could choose from multiple insurance plans that would compete for their enrollment, hopefully causing a fair competitive healthcare market.

The government would strictly regulate insurance practices and impose limits on the growth of insurance premiums to control costs.

The plan was seen as a synthesis of the (liberal) universal coverage and the (conservative) managed competition among private insurers.

In addition, the plan promised Americans choices on Health Care without any New Taxes or changes to the Medicare Program.
The Seventh Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1993 - 1997

The Clinton Health Care Plan Proposal

COVERAGE and BENEFITS

- U.S. Citizens or Nationals
- Legal Aliens under U.S. Laws
- Medicare eligible individuals
- U.S. Military Personnel and their Families
- U.S. Military Veterans and their Families
- Native Americans

- Hospital and Clinic Services
- Outpatient Services
- Home Health Care Services
- Rehabilitation Services
- Vision and Dental Care
- Prescription Drugs
- Medical Equipment & Devices
- Ambulance Services
The Seventh Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1993 - 1997

Criticism of the Clinton Health Care Plan

Many Critics of the Clinton Health Care Plan indicate that its greatest mistake was that it was too ambitious.

The Clinton health Care Plan attempted to simultaneously:

- Secure Universal Health Care Coverage for ALL Americans
- Regulate the Private Health Care Insurance Market
- Change Heath Care Financing through Employer Mandated Taxes
- Control Health Care Costs to levels Enforced by a National Heath Care Board
- Transform the current Health Care Services System to a Controlled and Managed Heath Care System
The Seventh Attempt at Healthcare Reform  
1993 - 1997

Opposition to the Clinton Health Care Plan

Five competing proposals were also introduced in Congress – two Democratic, two Republican, and one modeled after the Canadian System.

A few key issues arose against the Clinton Health Care Plan were:

• Many Americans rallied against what they called “Hillarycare,” because the Task Force meetings were held behind closed doors in violation of the so-called “Sunshine Laws.”

• Middle Class Americans, who already had health coverage, were worried that the new plan would make premiums rise drastically.

• Health Care Providers and Insurance Companies worried that their profits and operational freedoms would be reduced.
The Seventh Attempt at Healthcare Reform
1993 - 1994

Defeat of the Clinton Health Care Plan

Support of the Clinton Health Care Plan peaked with its introduction in 1993 at 59% and dropped to 42% by June of 1994.

April 1994: A key turning point occurred during a televised town hall meeting when businessman Herman Cain of Georgia challenged the President on the negative impact the plan would have on small business owners.

As the battle ensued among competing stakeholders and lobbyists, legislative support for the plan began to fall apart due to it being too complex, expensive, and poorly planned.

Ultimately, the Clinton Health Care Plan died in Committee without ever reaching the Congressional floor for a vote during the 1994 session.
Republican Response to Government Spending 1994

The “Contract with America”

1994 Elections: Republicans won control of both the House and Senate for the first time in forty years.

Lead by the new Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich of Georgia, the Republicans set forth a plan called the “Contract with America.”

Goals of the Contract With America

- Balanced federal budget
- Welfare reform
- Tax cuts for middle-income families
- Decreased federal bureaucracy
- Term limits for members of Congress

The contract’s message caused high voter turnout by Republicans in 1994.

However, Americans did not support Newt Gingrich’s ideas for cutting Medicare.
Republican Response to Government Spending 1995-1996

The Government Shutdown Controversy

During 1995: The Republican dominated Congress was dedicated to reducing the rate of government spending.

This conflicted with President Bill Clinton's objectives for Education, the Environment, Medicare, and Public Health.

When the fiscal year ended on 30 September 1995, the President & Congress had not managed to agree on the federal budget for 1996.

By Nov 1995: Major portions of the Federal Government suspended operations at a cost of $400 million to pay furloughed employees.

Although a temporary spending bill was passed while negotiations continued, it took a second shutdown of 22 days before the President and Congress finally agreed on a new budget.
Other Attempts at Healthcare Reform

1997

State Children’s Health Insurance Program

1997: President Bill Clinton signed an initiative to provide matching Federal Funds to moderate income families with child healthcare issues who did not qualify for Medicare.

Because the formula given to states gave federal incentives for adding Middle Class youngsters and even adults to the program, costs rapidly spiraled out of control.

By 2008: The State Children’s Health Insurance Program covered not only 7 million children, but also 600,000 adults in 14 States.

In Six States, more money was being spent on adults than on children.

The program had also failed to enroll over 2 million qualifying children.
Other Attempts at Healthcare Reform
2003

The Medicare Modernization Act

2003: President George W. Bush signed the Medicare Modernization Act to extend coverage to include Prescription Drug Coverage.

Democrats opposed the President’s legislation as a sham that would inevitably destroy Medicare and rallied around Senator Ted Kennedy to protect it.

“Do you trust the HMO-coddling, drug company loving, Medicare destroying, Social-Security hating Bush administration? Or do you trust the Democrats, who created Medicare and will fight with you to defend it - every day of every week, of every year?”

The Act still passed Congress.
The Eighth Attempt at Healthcare Reform
2008-Present

During the 2008 Presidential Campaign, Democratic Senator Barrack Obama promised to bring about sweeping Health Care Reforms for an estimated 47 Million Americans who could not afford insurance.

Why is it named Obama Care?

How different is it from Clinton Care?

What role has Congress actually played in this issue?