

Republicans cave, we save

Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 03.30.23

On Obamacare's 13th anniversary, NC's Republican-controlled legislature finally gave up obstructing expanded Medicaid coverage. The Republicans' decade-long obstruction cost lives, suffering, and economic growth, which makes the news bittersweet. What took so long?

In 2008, Barack Obama pledged to enact healthcare reform. He won by nearly 10 million votes, and carried North Carolina. In response, Republican leaders, including Kevin McCarthy and Mitch McConnell, vowed to oppose Obama on everything.

So, Democrats passed Obamacare with ZERO Republican votes. It wouldn't take effect, and voters wouldn't feel its benefits, until 2014. That gave Republicans time to campaign on repealing what they falsely called a "government takeover of healthcare." PolitiFact named that its 2010 "Lie of the Year," but it worked. Republicans won nationally and controlled NC's legislature for the first time since 1898.

Obamacare works with private insurers to eliminate coverage caps and many deductibles. It prevents insurers from denying coverage for preexisting conditions or dropping policyholders who become ill. It also enables states to expand Medicaid coverage to millions, with the federal government paying 90% of the cost.

For years, Republican-controlled states like NC refused, afraid Obamacare would become popular, which it did. Obamacare enrollment is higher than ever. NC is third highest in enrollments, and 78% of North Carolinians support expanding Medicaid. That's why Republicans finally caved.

But consider the fallout of Republican obstructionism. A UNC study says NC suffered over 1,000 preventable deaths every year. North Carolina Healthcare Association reports that our infant mortality rate is twice what it could have been — a statistic at odds with a pro-life stance. Over 600,000 people/year were denied coverage, costing \$6 billion in healthcare funding and \$3 billion in economic growth.

Thirty-nine states expanded Medicaid before NC Republicans finally caved, after causing years of needless suffering and pain for petty political gain. Shame on them!

Shelley Allen
Holden Beach