Healthcare reform to prompt employers to drop coverage? Yeah, about that...

By Tami Dennis, HealthKey / For the Booster Shots blog

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The recent prediction that healthcare reform might lead employers to drop insurance coverage does not sit well with everyone. That insurance forecast, based on a report by McKinsey Quarterly, has received a fair amount of media attention -- which is perhaps unsurprising. Many Americans, with agenda or without, are regarding the upcoming changes with either anxiety or anticipation, and no one has a crystal ball.

From the Booster Shots post on the matter: "The Congressional Budget Office estimated that only 7% of employees would be forced into subsidized-exchange policies, the report said, but the survey of more than 1,300 employers suggests otherwise. That research found that 30% said they would..."
Nick Papas, a White House spokesman, made it quite clear that not everyone accepts such a prediction.

"The experts from the Congressional Budget Office, the Rand Corporation, the Urban Institute have reached a decidedly different conclusion. And history has shown that reform motivates more businesses to offer insurance. When Massachusetts enacted health reform, the number of individuals with employer-sponsored insurance increased," he wrote in an email.

He helpfully included links to the reports from Rand, Urban Institute and Mercer.

Meanwhile, the Hill's Healthwatch blog put the reaction to the McKinsey report in perspective:

"The White House and House Republicans are in a tough fight to shape public perception of the healthcare reform law after a consulting firm said it could lead to 30 percent of employers dropping coverage starting in 2014. ... With the House not in session this week, it took a while for political rhetoric to flare up after McKinsey released its report late Monday. But by Wednesday the barbs were flying."

It helpfully included a link to the Prescription Pad blog of Republicans on the House Ways and Means Committee.

If you just can't get enough of such analyses, predictions and back-and-forth, Kaiser Health News offered this roundup earlier this year: Analysis, Predictions Mark Health Law's First Anniversary.

Of course, as with any prediction or reaction, consider the source.

And, if you're a consumer just trying to figure things out, try ProCon.org's take on health reform. And stay tuned.
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Each day, we feature one reader photo. Above, an eclectic group outside Rainbow bar on Sunset Blvd. Today's photo

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