



No Answers On ObamaCare

Amid Mounting Criticism Over ObamaCare's Rocky Rollout, The Obama Administration Has Failed To Answer Basic Questions

Yesterday, Obama Tried To Assure Americans That He Would Fix The ObamaCare Website, While “Fear Is Growing” Inside The Administration That Many Americans May “Just Give Up.” “President Obama said Monday his administration was spearheading a ‘tech surge’ to fix the problems plaguing the online ObamaCare insurance exchanges. ... The president's reassurances come at a critical time for the president's signature program. Fear is growing among the administration and Democratic allies that a steady beat of stories detailing problems with the website could lead many Americans to just give up on trying to secure coverage, undermining the potential of the healthcare reform law.” (Justin Sink, “Obama: ‘No One Is Madder Than Me’ About Health Care Website,” [The Hill's Briefing Room](#), 10/21/13)

Obama's Speech “Sounded A Lot Like Hold Music.” “President Barack Obama Delivered An ObamaCare Speech Monday That Sounded A Lot Like Hold Music.” (Carrie Budoff Brown, “Obama: Your Call Is Important To Us,” [Politico](#), 10/21/13)

- **ObamaCare Has Become “So Problematic,” That Obama “Was Reduced To Hawking Health Care With A 1-800 Number.”** “It's been so problematic that Obama, who twice won the White House by assembling the most tech-savvy minds in politics and rewriting the modern campaign playbook with his use of social media, was reduced to hawking health care with a 1-800 number.” (Carrie Budoff Brown, “Obama: Your Call Is Important To Us,” [Politico](#), 10/21/13)

ANSWERS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION ABOUT WHAT WENT WRONG ARE LACKING

Obama Failed To Provide Details “Why The Website Fell So Short And When He Knew The Extent Of The Issues.” “He acknowledged the difficulties but he declined to get detailed why the website fell so short and when he knew the extent of the issues — questions that aren't likely to abate any time soon.” (Carrie Budoff Brown, “Obama: Your Call Is Important To Us,” [Politico](#), 10/21/13)

The White House Won't Say If The ObamaCare Exchange Website Will Be Fixed By January 1

White House Communications Director Jennifer Palmieri Was Unable To Say When The ObamaCare Exchange Website Would Be Fixed. MSNBC'S KRISTEN WELKER: “Can you be a little bit more specific about the timeline, will the website be operating smoothly before that December 15 deadline, which is necessary for folks to enroll if they want coverage January 1.” JENNIFER PALMIERI: “I'm not a tech expert but I did say that it's getting – we're making progress every day and we're going to stay at it and we're not going to predict time lines on addressing particular problems, but we're just going to stay at it until it is fixed.” WELKER: “Well if you don't have it fixed?” PALMIERI: “It's been a rocky start, but we are 21 days into 180 day process. So we will take this as it comes.” WELKER: “Jen if you don't have

it fixed in time, will people still have to pay that penalty? I mean, would you think about.”PALMIERI: that is a – if we don’t have it fixed in time is a hypothetical that we don’t expect to encounter. We’re taking this day by day and we’re making progress every day and we’re going to keep at it and in the meantime, we’re going to find these options for other ways for people to enroll.” (MSNBC’s [“Andrea Mitchell Reports,”](#) 10/21/13)

- **CNN’s Jake Tapper To White House Deputy Sr. Advisor David Simas: “David, You Won’t Even Say Whether Or Not It [The Website] Will Be Fixed By March.”** JAKE TAPPER: “David, you won’t even say whether or not it will be fixed by March.” DAVID SIMAS: “Jake, I did. I said--” TAPPER: “No, you said the phone service will be working.” SIMAS: “Jake, I said that the main purpose of the Affordable Care Act is not a website. It’s to make sure that any American who is either uninsured or in the individual market has options to get insurance. That will happen. That’s our sole focus and that’s what we’re going to do.” (CNN’s [“The Lead,”](#) 10/21/13)

The ObamaCare Exchange “Might Not Operate Smoothly Until After The Dec. 15 Deadline.” “Some specialists working on the project said the online system required such extensive repairs that it might not operate smoothly until after the Dec. 15 deadline for people to sign up for coverage starting in January, although that view is not universally shared.” (Sharon LaFraniere, Ian Austen, and Robert Pear, “Contractors See Weeks Of Work On Health Site,” [The New York Times](#), 10/20/13)

- **Contractors Say That It’s “Unrealistic” To Expect A November ObamaCare Reboot.** “Administration officials approached the contractors last week to see if they could perform the necessary repairs and reboot the system by Nov. 1. However, that goal struck many contractors as unrealistic, at least for major components of the system.” (Sharon LaFraniere, Ian Austen, and Robert Pear, “Contractors See Weeks Of Work On Health Site,” [The New York Times](#), 10/20/13)
- **“As Many As Five Million Lines Of Software Code May Need To Be Rewritten.”** “One specialist said that as many as five million lines of software code may need to be rewritten before the Web site runs properly.” (Sharon LaFraniere, Ian Austen, and Robert Pear, “Contractors See Weeks Of Work On Health Site,” [The New York Times](#), 10/20/13)

The White House Continues To Blame Volume For The ObamaCare Website’s Problems Despite Overwhelming Evidence Pointing To Website Glitches

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, On The Underlying Problems With ObamaCare: “The Volume Far Exceeded Expectations...” JAY CARNEY: “Well, what I would tell you is, as I said earlier, is that the volume far exceeded expectations and that the volume both created problems because of how large it was and exposed other problems and glitches and kinks with the system that are being addressed.” (White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, [Press Briefing](#), Washington, DC, 10/21/13)

The ObamaCare Exchange Website’s Glitches Stem “From The Failure Of A Major Software Component.” “The technical problems that have hampered enrollment in the online health insurance exchanges resulted from the failure of a major software component, designed by private contractors, that crashed under the weight of millions of users last week, federal officials said Monday.” (Michael Shear, “Health Exchange Delays Tied To Software Crash In Early Rush,” [The New York Times](#), 10/8/13)

- **Avalere Health CEO: “This Is Not Solely A Traffic Issue ... There Are More Underlying Issues That Have To Be Resolved.”** ““This is not solely a traffic issue,’ said Dan Mendelson, CEO of consultant Avalere Health. ‘There are more underlying issues that have to be resolved.’” (Jay Hancock and Phil Galewitz, “Experts Suggest Software Problems, Not Just Demand, May Be Behind Marketplace Glitches,” [Kaiser Health News](#), 10/4/13)

- **President Of A Database Company About The ObamaCare Website: “People Higher Up Are Given The Excuse That There Are Too Many Users. That’s A Convenient Excuse For The Managers To Pass Up The Chain.”** “‘It’s poorly designed,’ said Luke Chung, the president of a database company in Virginia who has publicly criticized the site in recent days. ‘People higher up are given the excuse that there are too many users. That’s a convenient excuse for the managers to pass up the chain.’” (Michael Shear, “Health Exchange Delays Tied To Software Crash In Early Rush,” [The New York Times](#), 10/8/13)

Visitors To ObamaCare’s Exchange Website Dropped 88 Percent Between Oct. 1 And Oct. 13. “The number of visitors to the federal government’s HealthCare.gov Website dropped 88 percent between Oct. 1 and Oct. 13, according to a new analysis of America’s online use, while less than half of 1 percent of the site’s visitors successfully enrolled for health insurance the first week. The new numbers on the health-care law — released by Kantar US Insights and based on an assessment conducted by the nonpartisan research firm Millward Brown Digital — provide a partial snapshot of how the federal health-care exchange has fared since it launched at the start of the month.” (Juliet Eilperin, “Visits To Federal Health Care Website Off 88%,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/15/13)

The White House Can’t Recall If The ObamaCare Exchange Website Was Ever “Beta-Tested” Prior To Launch

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney Was Unable To Answer Whether ObamaCare Was Beta-Tested. JAY CARNEY: “Yes -- well, I don’t know -- in terms of the types of testing, I would refer -- I just don’t want to pretend to be an expert. What I can say is that the system has not worked as effectively and efficiently, obviously, as we wanted it to -- the President, Secretary, anybody wanted it to. And that’s why people are working as hard as they’re working and people are being brought in to work as hard as they can work to help address these problems.” (White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, [Press Briefing](#), Washington, DC, 10/21/13)

CBS News Headline: “ObamaCare Website Looks ‘Like Nobody Tested It,’ Programmer Says.” (“ObamaCare Website Looks ‘Like Nobody Tested It,’ Programmer Says,” [CBS News](#), 10/9/13)

- **Computer Expert And ObamaCare Supporter: “It’s Not Even Ready For Beta-Testing For My Book. ... I Would Be Ashamed And Embarrassed If My Organization Delivered Something Like That.”** “‘It wasn’t designed well, it wasn’t implemented well, and it looks like nobody tested it,’ said Luke Chung, an online database programmer. Chung supports the new health care law but said it was not the demand that is crashing the site. He thinks the entire website needs a complete overhaul. ‘It’s not even close. It’s not even ready for beta testing for my book. I would be ashamed and embarrassed if my organization delivered something like that,’ he said.” (“ObamaCare Website Looks ‘Like Nobody Tested It,’ Programmer Says,” [CBS News](#), 10/9/13)

The Huffington Post’s Sam Stein: “No One Beta-Tested The Site, Which Is Almost Criminal.” “‘No one beta-tested the site, which is almost criminal,’ the Huffington Post’s Sam Stein said. ‘They keep using the word unacceptable. It’s not unacceptable, it’s outrageous,’ Mike Barnicle said. ‘This is the president’s singular achievement, and to be so reticent about the problems that have gone is kind of surprising.’” (Jane C. Timm, “These Aren’t Glitches, Obamacare Is Broken Says Ezra Klein,” [MSNBC](#), 10/21/13)

The White House Ducked Questions On Why CGI Federal Was Chosen To Build The ObamaCare Website Despite Past Troubles

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney Repeatedly Referred Questions About CGI To HHS And CMS. ABC’S JONATHAN KARL: “The main contractor that helped to build this website, CGI were fired by Ontario, Canada, for problems up there. Did the administration choose the wrong people to build this

website?" JAY CARNEY: "A lot of people are working on this. I would refer you to HHS about contractors. That is not something the White House oversees. The President made clear today that he is not satisfied what the consumer experience with the website and the administration, HHS and CMS, are working 24/7 to improve the experience." KARL: "The contractor, the top guy starting at \$93 million, if you have \$292 million, where is that money coming from?" CARNEY: "I would refer you to HHS for questions about HHS contracts." (White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, [Press Briefing](#), Washington, DC, 10/21/13)

CGI Federal "Orchestrated Most Of The Healthcare.gov Web Site." "Over the past few weeks, if you've been paying attention at all to the unfolding disaster of people trying and failing to sign up for ObamaCare online, one name keeps coming up: CGI Federal, the IT contractor that has orchestrated most of the Healthcare.gov Web site." (Lydia DePillis, "Meet CGI Federal, The Company Behind The Botched Launch Of HealthCare.gov," [The Washington Post's WonkBlog](#), 10/16/13)

- **The Exchange Website Has "Been A Complete Train Wreck, For Reasons Both Technical And Bureaucratic."** "By most accounts, it's been a complete train wreck, for reasons both technical and bureaucratic." (Lydia DePillis, "Meet CGI Federal, The Company Behind The Botched Launch Of HealthCare.gov," [The Washington Post's WonkBlog](#), 10/16/13)

A Reuters Review Found That Despite Numerous Warnings, A Contract To Construct The ObamaCare Exchange "Tripled In Potential Total Value To Nearly \$292 Million." "A Reuters review of government documents shows that the contract to build the federal Healthcare.gov online insurance website - key to President Barack Obama's signature health care reform - tripled in potential total value to nearly \$292 million as new money was assigned to the work beginning in April this year. The increase coincided with warnings from federal and state officials that the information technology underlying the online marketplaces, or exchanges, where people could buy ObamaCare health insurance was in trouble." (Sharon Begley, "Insight: As ObamaCare Tech Woes Mounted, Contractor Payments Soared," [Reuters](#), 10/17/13)

CGI's Shoddy Work And Missed Deadlines In Canada Caused Canadian Officials To Scrap A \$46.2 Million Contract With CGI. "Experience in similar types of projects is very important in getting federal contracts. CGI had done work in the healthcare arena, and not all of it good: Its performance on Ontario, Canada's health-care medical registry for diabetes sufferers was so poor that officials ditched the \$46.2 million contract after three years of missed deadlines, the Washington Examiner reported. A spokeswoman for CGI says that both parties are bound by confidentiality agreements, but they're working on resolving the situation." (Lydia DePillis, "Meet CGI Federal, The Company Behind The Botched Launch Of HealthCare.gov," [The Washington Post's WonkBlog](#), 10/16/13)

The White House Won't Even Say Who Is On The A-Team That Obama Has Dispatched To Fix ObamaCare

At Yesterday's Press Briefing, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney Referred Questions About The ObamaCare Fixers To HHS And CMS. JAY CARNEY: "These are additional contractors as well as a few experts who are part of the Presidential Innovations Fellows program, which was started by the President in his first year -- rather, his first term -- and it pairs top innovators from the private sector, nonprofits and academia with top innovators within government to collaborate. In terms of who they are, individually, and the contractors, those are the kinds of questions that you should address to HHS and CMS since this is something that they've launched and are working on right now." (White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, Press Briefing, Washington, DC, 10/21/13)

- **When Asked About The Team, An HHS Official Didn't Have A List Of Names.** "I don't have a list of names, but they include people from within the federal government and from the private

sector,' a Department Of Health And Human Services official told BuzzFeed." (Evan McMorris-Santoro, "Administration Won't Say Who's On The Team That's Supposed To Fix ObamaCare Site," [Buzzfeed](#), 10/21/13)

Centers For Medicare And Medicaid Services (CMS) Did Not Have The Expertise To Run The Exchange. "One major problem slowing repairs, people close to the program say, is that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the federal agency in charge of the exchange, is responsible for making sure that the separately designed databases and pieces of software from 55 contractors work together. It is not common for a federal agency to assume that role, and numerous people involved in the project said the agency did not have the expertise to do the job and did not fully understand what it entailed." (Sharon LaFraniere, Ian Austen, and Robert Pear, "Contractors See Weeks Of Work On Health Site," [The New York Times](#), 10/20/13)

The White House Is Ignoring Calls For Delaying ObamaCare's Individual Mandate As The Website Is Broken

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney Was Unable To Say If The Obama Administration Would Delay The Individual Mandate If The ObamaCare Website Problems Persist. JAY CARNEY: "Jon, I appreciate what you're saying and I have answered now and will answer again that people who." KARL: "I don't understand the answer, though. If the website is not fixed, will people still have to pay the fine?" CARNEY: "First of all, we're way still early in the process. So you're talking about a February 15th and a March 31st deadline; it is October 21st today. So let's be clear about that. We're three weeks into this. And that's number one. Number two, as written, the law makes clear that people who do not have access to affordable care due to a state not expanding Medicaid or other factors will not be penalized." (White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, [Press Briefing](#), Washington, DC, 10/21/13)

- **ABC's Jon Karl To Carney: "You Can't Really Charge People A Fine For Not Getting Health Insurance If You Don't Fix This Mess, If You Can't Make This Website Work, Can You?"** (White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, [Press Briefing](#), Washington, DC, 10/21/13)