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OBAMACARE: DEAD OR ALIVE?

I am a self-proclaimed Obamacare junkie; I have been studying the law for the past six years and have been living the effects personally and professionally. It seems there's been no escape for me since 2010 when it became the law of the land. And if I wanted to serve my clients at the highest level, which I do, I needed to understand it so they wouldn't need to. That meant reading hundreds if not thousands of pages of relevant parts of the law and its regulations.

The law has been progressively phased in, has had many changes, has had many of its own self imposed deadlines extended, has had some provisions repealed, witnessed a crash of the healthcare.gov website, but is still standing. And now when us junkies just got used to all this, Donald Trump won and is the President. Add to that fact that the Republicans maintained control of the House of Representatives and the Senate and will control the three houses.

So, what will happen to Obamacare should their collective promise to repeal and replace it succeed? Obamacare is the commonly known and used term for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act which is a law, not insurance. Individuals and many employers are required to comply with aspects of the law such as having or offering coverage. Insurance companies are also required to comply and thus have spent tens of

billions of dollars over the past six years analyzing and interpreting the law so they could modify plans and policies to be compliant. The mandates of the law are now deeply embedded into plan designs, underwriting guidelines, rating structures, definitions and contractual provisions. So it seems easy to conclude that the repeal of Obamacare will not "flip a switch" undoing the effects of the law. It is just too embedded and will take years to undo.

Parts of the law were popular such as having no pre-existing condition exclusions and allowing dependent children to remain on their parents' plan until age 26 and according to the President may remain.

At this point it is impossible to know what will change. Some things that may be first to leave us are the individual and employer mandates which will make the need for those pesky 1095's unnecessary (those W2-like slips we all got that recorded all the months of the previous year we had coverage). But the reality is, no one knows. Time will tell.

All I can say is right now is it's business as usual. I would not dare to guess where this is going since no one knows, but I can say with 100 percent confidence, things will change. As we learn more and are fed information from regulatory agencies and insurance companies, I will keep you updated in future articles.