The Daily Dish

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New parents were in for quite the surprise when they realized that it is almost impossible to add their newborns to their health insurance. Under the ACA, insurance companies cannot directly add children to parents' plans—parents must sign up their child on the exchange within 30 days of birth. It should be easy enough, but that was until the parents were told they must first apply for CHIP, be denied, and only then could they register their children for health care. Some families were denied because the process took more than the 30 day time limit.

Congressional Republicans are planning an overhaul of Social Security disability insurance. If nothing is changed, the program's trust fund is projected to run out of money in late 2016, forcing 20 percent cuts for all beneficiaries. On his future plan Congressman Ryan said, "I think there are going to be some temporary financing transition measures that will have to be probably included in this, but our goal is to improve the viability of the program and bring it into the 21st century."

Eakinomics: Friday Energy Follies

Fridays — especially late afternoon — are exciting times on the regulatory watch, as it is the Administration's favorite time to try to minimize the bad publicity associated with its new rules. This past Friday saw a $1.2 billion rule proposed by the Interior Department's Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. The most expensive provision is a proposed requirement for companies drilling in the Arctic Ocean to keep backup rigs on hand to dig relief wells in case of a spill. Industry experts argue the duplicative cost is not the most effective way to address the need for safety in the event of spills.

(It was not the only action on Friday; the administration made two announcements regarding the ongoing train wreck named Obamacare.)

The new rule is consistent with other Administration initiatives — notably the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program (DPP). The DPP got lots of attention for opening up the southern Atlantic coast for exploration. But the reality is that the Obama Administration takes more drilling off the table than it provides. Because it is omitted from the DPP, 90 percent of the U.S. OCS will be closed to exploration. In addition, this plan includes one *less* lease sale than the 2012-2017 leasing plan. Alaska will see three lease sales, but the DPP would also close up portions of both the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas and make the remaining exploration more expensive.

The president has proven himself to be a weak supporter of oil and gas exploration, but happy to take credit for the successes of others. Friday's rule is just another example.

From the Forum

Week in Regulation by Sam Batkins, AAF Director of Regulatory Policy