



The Daily Dish

Out of Pocket Health Care Costs and the ACA

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A new [AAF insight](#) this morning focuses on how ACA's increased deductibles are pushing patients towards financing their own health care costs. "In the pre-ACA insurance market, the amount a beneficiary was expected to pay in deductibles generally corresponded to their premium rate – higher premiums often resulted in lower deductibles and vice versa. Under the ACA, however, enrollees will pay exponentially more for their coverage, only to receive plans carrying unaffordable deductibles. Significantly increased out-of-pocket costs, combined with hospitals' fears over uncompensated services, will force some to finance the costs of their care, a financially risky choice."

This comes as the [Wall Street Journal](#) reports that "Insurers and some states are continuing to look for ways to bypass the balky technology underpinning the health-care law despite the Obama administration's claim Sunday that it had made "dramatic progress" in fixing the federal insurance website."

"One of the leading states operating its own exchange is considering ways to decouple itself from the federal infrastructure it relies on to confirm residents' eligibility for federal tax credits. That technology has been affected by planned and unplanned outages."

Eakinomics: Trade Promotion Authority

[Reports](#) indicate that Congress is nearing agreement on a bill to give the president Trade Promotion Authority (TPA). Every president since Franklin Roosevelt has had TPA. It is an essential part of modern trade negotiations because the Constitution gives Congress authority to regulate international trade. In order to negotiate effectively, TPA provides the executive branch the ability to consult extensively with Congress during negotiations, but assures that agreements will get an up-or-down vote without amendment or modification.

Every president should have TPA because trade agreements are important. Trade allows access to the 80 percent of purchasing power and 95 percent of the world consumers that are outside U.S. borders. They level the playing field for U.S. exporters, 97 percent of which are small businesses (who are responsible for nearly one-third of exports). In this way, TPA is pro-growth and pro-jobs.

Unfortunately, the policy arguments appear to fall on deaf ears among the extremes of both ideologies. On the left, populist distrust of big business and adherence to union dogma forge an opposition to TPA that the president has done little to combat. On the right, the president's overreach with his use of executive authority makes some reluctant to delegate negotiating authority. For these reasons, TPA is behind schedule and threatening the important Asian and European trade pacts.