



## Office Visit: How election will affect health care

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Earlier this month, our country witnessed a historic shift of congressional power. House Republicans gained a net of 60 seats, the largest power swing by either party since 1948. In 2008, health care played a big part in who Americans voted for in the election.

Two years later, it's the same song, but a different verse ... a much different verse. One of the biggest factors in this most recent election, according to exit polls, was that most Americans were more passionate about not having legislation forced on them than they were about universal health care. Out on the campaign trail, it was much of the same. Health care was a critical talking point for Republicans, while most Democrats shied away from the topic.

So what did this month's election results really mean for health care? For those hoping the president's Affordable Care Act (ACA) will be repealed, don't hold your breath. Although the Republicans did gain ground in the Senate, it's still the Democrat-controlled Senate that initially passed the bill. Most importantly, the legislation will most likely be President Barack Obama's biggest legacy – good or bad – and America doesn't get to decide if he deserves another term for two more years. What we can expect is that the Republicans' control of the House and gain in the Senate will bring focus on delaying or modifying sections of the ACA and how it's implemented.

According to U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., incoming chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, health care reform is an unparalleled encroachment of the federal government in the private sector and the lives of individual Americans and will be met, he promises, by vigorous congressional oversight.

The ACA, however, isn't the most pressing health care agenda item for either party. The latest Medicare Band-Aid runs out next month, which will mean cuts in physician reimbursement are on the horizon. The American Medical Association has urged Congress to put another temporary Band-Aid on the Medicare payment issue. It isn't likely Congress won't stop a cut to Medicare reimbursement and leave many without access to quality health care. Instead, expect a short-term solution that leaves the incoming Republican-controlled House to deal with the future of Medicare.

Regardless of any modification to the ACA or temporary or long-term fixes to Medicare and Medicaid, expect to hear the same rhetoric from both sides on the campaign trail through the 2012 election.

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