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# Here's what President Trump has done to unravel the ACA

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JIM LO SCALZO/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

**Trump has repeatedly said he wants to see the ACA “implode” or “explode,” and he and his administration have taken a series of steps toward that goal.**

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

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While efforts in Congress to repeal the Affordable Care Act have failed, President Trump has taken matters into his own hands, wielding executive branch power in an apparent attempt to undermine and dismantle the landmark health law.

Trump has repeatedly said he wants to see the ACA “[implode](#)” or “[explode](#),” and he and his administration have taken a series of steps toward that goal.

The latest actions came this week, but he's been chipping away for months. Here's a rundown of some of the key changes Trump has made to the landmark health care law:

### A warning shot on the first day

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On Trump's first day in office, he [issued](#) an executive order seeking to “minimize the unwarranted economic and regulatory burdens” of the ACA while his administration sought a repeal of the law.

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The order included language telling federal officials to, as much as the law would allow, waive or delay aspects of the law that might impose a fiscal or regulatory burdens on states, health care providers, families, or individuals.



## Healey joins suit to protect subsidies

Governor Charlie Baker joined Democrats in denouncing the White House move to roll back a key component of the Affordable Care Act.

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The wording and actual effects of this order were vague, but it laid out the administration's position and a general mission statement for it to follow in the months to come.

### **Shortening the timeframe for people to sign up**

The Trump administration has [cut](#) the length of open enrollment in half. Instead of running from Nov. 1 through Jan. 31 as it used to, the signup period will run just from Nov. 1 through Dec. 15 this year.

The administration also plans to take the signup website HealthCare.gov offline for maintenance between midnight and noon on five of the six Sundays during open enrollment.

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And it has [limited](#) the exceptions that allow people to sign up for plans outside the open enrollment period.

### **Slashing advertising and outreach funding**

The administration recently [cut](#) the advertising budget for the upcoming ACA signup season by 90 percent, from \$100 million to \$10 million.

They've also cut nearly 40 percent of funding for “navigators” who help consumers understand ACA options and sign up.

### **Rolling back requirements for employers to cover birth control**

The administration [issued](#) a rule this month allowing a much broader group of employers and insurers to exempt themselves on religious and moral grounds from ACA requirements on covering contraceptives such as birth control pills.

### **Selling cheaper policies with fewer benefits, protections**

On Thursday, Trump signed an executive [order](#) that includes sales of cheaper policies with fewer benefits and protections for consumers than those mandated under the Affordable Care Act.

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Some [worry](#) that while it could lead to lower insurance costs for healthy Americans, it might mean higher premiums for the sick, the old, and those with preexisting conditions.

These changes might not be finalized in time to affect coverage or premiums much for at least another year or two, experts say.

### Halting subsidies to health insurance companies

Trump's latest move on health care was [announced](#) late Thursday, when the White House moved to scrap subsidies to health insurance companies that help pay out-of-pocket costs of low-income people.

The move raised concerns that millions could be priced out of coverage, or insurers might pull out of markets, though one [nonpartisan analysis](#) suggested that the effects would not be so dire.

### More to come?

Trump called his second-most-recent action on health care Thursday a "beginning" and promised more was to come.

On Friday morning, he [tweeted](#) for congressional Democrats to "call me to fix" America's health care system, calling the ACA a "broken mess" and "imploding."

Wire service materials were used in this report. Evan Horowitz of the Globe staff contributed to this report. Matt Rocheleau can be reached at [matthew.rocheleau@globe.com](mailto:matthew.rocheleau@globe.com). Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele).

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