What is Obamacare?

Obamacare, officially known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, was a healthcare plan enacted in 2010. The primary goal was to reduce costs of medical care, and to protect people with preexisting conditions. The original plan required everyone to obtain a healthcare plan or pay a penalty. This provision was known as the individual mandate. It also increased taxes on some income groups, and it allowed more people to qualify for Medicaid. Additionally, Obamacare allowed people up to the age of 26 to stay on their parents' healthcare plan. It requires that all healthcare plans provide 10 essential services including preventative health visits, newborn/maternity care, and mental health care.

Passage of Obamacare

The passage of the bill was not easy. It was met with heavy opposition and had many provisions that people didn't agree with. For example, there was a public option provision which would establish a governmental healthcare system to compete with private healthcare providers. This specific provision ended up being removed from the bill due to the opposition threatening a "no" vote on the entire package. The entire package passed in the House of Representatives in 2009 by a vote of 220-215. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 60-39, and they amended it and sent it back to the House in 2010. The House passed it for a final time with a vote of 219-212. Barack Obama signed the package into law on March 23, 2010.

Repeal Attempts

There have been many attempts to repeal Obamacare. A bill was introduced in 2011 to repeal the act altogether, and it passed the House. The Senate voted on the idea as an amendment, but voted it down. The Supreme Court took up a case against Obamacare in 2012, and stated that it was a constitutional act. In 2013, there was a government shutdown due to several disagreements about Obamacare, which resulted in a failure to devise a spending plan for 2014. There were several more attempts over the decade, with over 60 recorded attempts in the House of Representatives alone. In 2017, Congress passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which eliminated the individual mandate portion of the package. This came to effect in January 2019.

Obamacare in 2021

The package still stands today, and millions of people gained coverage from it's provisions. 14 states decided not to adopt the Medicaid expansion plans listed in the original bill, so the actual impacts of the package vary from state to state. Although it was signed into law nearly 11 years ago, it is still a topic of debate in political discussions. Many politicians, especially those campaigning at the federal level, mention their stances on Obamacare during their campaigns. There will likely be more attempts to repeal the package, and there are many heated debates awaiting the public.