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Obamacare Has City Hospitals Drowning In Red Ink

By Post Editorial Board

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Don't look now, but the city's municipal hospitals are on financial life support — and the situation is growing more dire by the day. The biggest culprit? ObamaCare.

Meanwhile, Team de Blasio's plan to stem the bleeding is built largely on wishes.

According to a new Independent Budget Office report, hospital revenues are plummeting, thanks to funding cuts required by the Affordable Care Act and a decline in Medicaid patients. At the same time, costs are soaring, leaving the system with a cash shortfall of \$6.1 billion for 2016-20.

Next year, the feds will begin cutting subsidies to hospitals that serve the uninsured — based on the fanciful, self-serving assumption that most of those people now have coverage. Thanks, ObamaCare.

Yet in New York, many uninsured patients are illegal immigrants, ineligible for financial assistance under the ACA. They'll likely remain uninsured, even as they use city hospitals and drive up their costs.

Last March, the city injected \$339 million to keep the NYC Health + Hospitals (formerly the Health and Hospitals Corporation) afloat. City Hall pumped in another \$700 million through this year's budget.

But fiscal monitors openly fret about the future of the sprawling system.

The Citizens Budget Commission is questioning plans to plug the gap with savings, new revenue and existing cash. The IBO says Mayor de Blasio's blueprint lacks state and federal aid, as well as cooperation from labor unions.

All the while, H+H continues to lose Medicaid patients (and the reimbursements that go with them) as many pick up other insurance and seek care elsewhere.

Its hospitals will also continue to be forced to take on uninsured patients — even though requests for federal funds for these folks, some \$306 million over five years, await federal approval.

The IBO wants more details. Think: serious cost-cutting, including merging or amputating unnecessary or redundant units.



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Ten years ago, the Berger Commission confirmed what The Post had reported back then: Hospitals had too many empty beds. Since then, some closed or merged. Time for Berger & Co. to reconvene?

Meanwhile, progressives like Mayor de Blasio should learn a lesson: Find out exactly what's in bills like ObamaCare before supporting their passage.