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Mark Masselli: This is Conversations on Health Care, I am Mark Masselli.

Margaret Flinter: And I am Margaret Flinter.

Mark Masselli: Well Margaret we've passed the three million mark on the federal exchanges in terms of enrollment.

Margaret Flinter: Well, that is great Mark. More than three million Americans have signed up for health insurance coverage on the exchange and boy did those numbers jump in January.

Mark Masselli: The state exchanges have also seen some brisk activity but you know but you know there are some challenges in those market places as well.

Margaret Flinter: Yeah, Massachusetts has brought in experts to fix that state's exchange course that's somewhat surprising considering that the state really has had near universal coverage and a high functioning exchange since 2006.

Mark Masselli: You know, it's Oregon and Massachusetts and Maryland who've all had technical problems but they are still trying to work out the kinks in their systems. But across the country we're seeing other state exchanges they're doing a great work.

Margaret Flinter: So, some continued issues as this rollout unfolds but success stories too including those three million people.

Mark Masselli: Well, we've got a great guest today and that is a former congressman John E Porter who is the chairman of Research America organization dedicated to fostering government funding of Medical and Scientific Research. He's a leading crusader for increasing the funding to the national institute of health.

Margaret Flinter: He has a unique perspective on just how vitally important it is to sustain funding for scientific research in this country.

Mark Masselli: Lori Robertson Managing Editor of FactCheck.org, looks at misstatements about health policy spoken in the public domain.

Margaret Flinter: And no matter what the topic you can hear all of our shows by Googling CHC Radio.

Mark Masselli: And if you have any comments we'd love to hear from you email us at [chcradio.com](mailto:chcradio.com) or find us on Facebook or Twitter.

Margaret Flinter: We'll get to our interview with Congressman John E Porter in just a moment.

Mark Masselli: But, first here is our producer, Marianne O'Hare, with this week's Headline News.

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Marianne O'Hare: I am Marianne O'Hare with these Health Care Headlines. A federal exchange has been running rather smoothly for a several months now but, there is still one element that won't be fully functional for at least several months. The automated payment system for Obama Care is not expected to be fully operational for a while the piece that allows the administration to verify how many newly signed customers are actually paying their monthly premiums in our hands truly enrolled. That was one of the major glitches discovered with healthcare.gov when it first went online.

Meanwhile, the numbers of young invincible and Latinos are lagging behind expectations for those signing up for health care, one group has shown up in big numbers. However the 50 and 60 some things who lost jobs with benefits during the great recession and couldn't find affordable coverage afterwards due to preexisting conditions. And there's another trend related to the health care law. American physicians worried about changes in the health care market are streaming into salary jobs with hospitals though the shift from private practice has been most pronounced in primary care specialist are following last year 64% of job offers filled through Merritt Hawkins one of the nation's leading physicians placement firms involved hospital employment compare with only 11% in 2004. The firm anticipates a rise to 75% in the next two years, I am Marianne O'Hare with these Health Care Headlines.

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Mark Masselli: We're speaking today with former congressman John E. Porter winner of the 2014 public welfare medal the most prestigious award bestowed by the national academy of sciences. Congressman Porter served for 21 years in the U.S House of Representatives and was Founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Human Right Caucus. He also oversaw funding for all federal health spending including increased funding for the National Institutes of Health. Congressman Porter is a member of the Institute of Medicine and he is Chairman of Research America which is dedicated to making medical and scientific research a national priority. He is a recipient of numerous other awards including the Albert Sabin Hero of science award from the Americans for Medical Progress. Congressman Porter, welcome to Conversations on Health Care.

John E. Porter: Well, Mark and Margaret thank you very much as a non-scientist I'm very humbled by this high honor that NAS has bestowing on me.

Mark Masselli: Well you should be very proud and it couldn't come to a better recipient.

John E. Porter: I think, we should put me in to a timeframe I served in congress from 1980 to 2001. So I've been retired from congress about 13 years.

Mark Masselli: Well, you've a – you continue to keep on ticking and, you know, what's happen the bipartisan support for **NIH** and you really let the charge back in 1995 for NIAH's largest increase in its funding and its history and so I'd like to figure out where we are today. And then also tell our listeners about the initiatives you've launched to expand the scope of the work of NIAH.

Interviewer: I'm a republic and I'm not a republican, suddenly became the majority party in the House of Representatives. The first thing that they did is to pass a budget that provided for cuts for NIH of 5% a year for five straight years or 25% cut for NIH. I thought that was insane, and what I did is gathered together a group of scientist and business people and took them into see the new speaker. And they spend 40 minutes telling him how this was really bad policy for our country. And at the end of the time to his credit, he said I think we've made a mistake and I'm going to work to reverse that mistake and became a supporter of science research. Three years later the economy began to pick up, that led me to belief that we could then pursue the doubling from a medical research and I put it my highest priority as chairman of the subcommittee. My counterpart in the Senath at that time was Senator Arlen Specter who has since passed away but I also work with Tom Harkin who is now the chairman of the subcommittee but who was retiring to bipartisan priority made for doubling funding for NIH. And we were able to achieve that, it completed the doubling in 2003 after I actually left congress. It's something that I think made a huge difference because they took the base of funding which was then 13.5 billion dollars and raised it to 27 billion dollars. The difficulty today is that it isn't much higher than 27 billion dollars and if you look at the new inflation rate in scientific research we're actually on a reverse course especially with the sequester.

Margaret Flinter: Well congressman I understand that you used your initiative to increase the funding, to also expand the scope of the work of NIH and I think some, not worthy scientific breakthroughs were achieved as result perhaps you could share a little bit of that with our listeners.

John E Porter: Well I -- it was an appropriate so I dealt with the money that we committed to this as a national priority and to encourage the placing of – at a higher national priority and the increasing funding. So I really can't say that I had anything to do with this scope or the type of research that was done in fact I think that those decisions – well there have been some slippage of late but wisely the politicians have left scientific decisions for the scientist. And that is exactly the way it ought to be and every time I hear somebody in the congress saying that they want to tell science how to choose priorities that I think is a huge mistake and should never be allowed. They know what is possible with the funds that they have and I've always encouraged congress to keep its hands off of scientific decision making.

Mark Masselli: But you've been very much focused in on the economic aspect and the impact that scientific and medical research can have and we've had the NIH President Dr. Francis Collins on the show talking about the project he oversaw to map the human genome and which cost about \$4 billion to accomplish but he said it is leveraged over a

\$140 billion additional economic growth. And so what sort of impact does the scientific research have to our countries economic well being?

John E Porter: I think that the Francis is being a little bit conservative about the economic impact he says it's 35 times the amount invested, I think it's more like 70 times the amount invested if you think of all the spinoffs. I believe that research science innovation technology that is the economic destiny of our country. This is where we lead the world, this is where we can compete with the world, but we can't do so without healthy sustain investments. And Francis will tell you scientific opportunities have never been greater and yet we're (inaudible 9:17) down our funding, putting science at a lower priority at the time when we should be doing just the opposite.

Margaret Flinter: Well congressman, you know we believe in our organization that Health Care is a right and not a privilege which is on the care delivery end of things. But certainly over these years, we've watch as the numbers grew to 15 million uninsured American and now at last the Affordable Care Act is here to help us remedy that disparity. And the Affordable Care Act has its own commitment to research in some ways and to making things better, so from your position or somebody so engaged in research, how do you think the Affordable Care Act is going to advance the cost of research and quality in health care?

John E Porter: I think that the Affordable Care Act has within the potential to transfer our health care system from a fee for service system that we know is not sustainable to a quality care system where providers are paid for quality care of our citizens and its already beginning to change that way. The male clinic, the Cleveland clinic Kaiser Permanente and others are bringing together the health care providers in one large group to serve their large population of patients and that impels them to do so efficiently because they are being capitated in other words they're being paid so much money by the government to provide a care in their provider system. And that makes them very conscious of quality so I think the Affordable Care Act has a lot of other provisions that lead us in that direction but it is actually beginning to help move that process of improving our health care system to one that it is sustainable and one that is based on quality and one that looks at the patient and what we can do for the patient in a way that I don't think most people understand.

Mark Masselli: We're speaking today with Former Congressman John E. Porter-Winner of the 2014 Public Welfare Medal , the most prestigious award bestowed by the National Academy of Sciences, Congressman Porter served for 21 years in the US House of Representatives. Congressman Porter is Chairman of Research America which is dedicated to making medical in scientific research a national priority. Congressman let's talk about the work that you oversee at Research America. I think our listeners would be interested in hearing more about the mission and the goals of the organizations and also the partnership that are making their work happen.

John E Porter: Research America is the only organization that is devoted solely to putting research at a high national priority and providing strong federal support for research in our country. It's made up of about 380 corporations, universities, medical centers, research institutions, professional societies all working together on that mission. You know, if we look at what just happening today as young people who are aspiring to careers in scientific research, looking at the funding going down instead of being sustained and put in a high priority. We are going to lose the leads that we have in the world and we are going to lose the ability to attract as we have over the last 50 years. Scientists from all over the world who are enriching our science and enriching our society that's going to go away because we have a lot of competition out there. It is a well funded and United States -- this is where we lead the role, why would we want to give that up. And It seems to me that this is a serious problem for our country.

Margaret Flinter: Well Congressman I know that others are carrying the baton in this area of research. And in fact your organization is preparing to owner a couple of members of congress, I think from both sides of the aisle, Congressman Frank Wolf and Chaka Fattah. Can you tell us more about the work that they are being loaded for and why efforts like theirs gives you some hope for the future?

John E Porter: Well Research America has been recognizing achievements in scientific advocacy and in congress, a leadership in congress for about 20 plus years with our awards dinner. Chaka Fattah has been on the appropriations committee I think nearly 20 years, but his efforts most recently have been in mental health research and putting that at a higher priority. And we all know that, that has a great bearing on a lot of other issues. We used to invite in the noble lords and spend our subcommittee we'd spend an entire day with 8 or 9 noble lords. And I can remember the question being asked and it might have been me that asked the -- where would you put money if you could put it only in one area of research and every one of them said we know a great deal about the body below the neck. We don't know much about the brain and he is providing great leadership in that area. Now Frank, Frank is retiring from the Congress unfortunately but he has been there for 34 years and he's been a tremendous leader in respect to research particularly for the physical scientist. Right now he chairs the subcommittee that funds most of the physical science research like the National Science Foundation and NOAH and this and others. Congress is very siloed people have to understand that research is funding in a whole different number of different sub committees. But through the years Frank has been a tremendous leader to put appropriations for physical science research and for medical science research the high priority. I have to say that Frank also is been great leader in human rights and when I retired from Congress and gave up the post as co-chairman on the Human Rights Caucus I asked Frank if he would take that position for me and he has been leading in ways that really has made a different for human rights. So, we've got two great member of congress to recognize.

Mark Masselli: Well, Congressman Porter you are also a leader and mentor and you've certainly accrued some well deserved accolades in your life's work and which you also have mentor and what do you think about the most important contributions you've been

able to make in the promotion of science and medical research. But, what about that next regeneration you're going to recognize some of the leaders who you've passed the baton on. What are you thinking about how people should move forward how are you mentoring others as well.

John E Porter: Well, I think the big problem Mark and Margaret is that we are losing the people who have providing leadership in science in the congress for a long, long time. And the congress has become a different institution now then it was when I served in it, when I served in it we would sit down together and work out our differences and the address problems and do our best to get them solved. It's become a rather inhospitable place to that kind of compromised and working together for the good of the country, one of my theories is that when I came to congress mainly only leaders of both parties and the chairman of many of the big subcommittees were all veterans of World War II and were used to working together for the good of the country. That has been lost and people come now to seemingly to work for the good of their party but unwilling to give to come and to find common ground to move the country forward. I think it's a situation that is going to be very difficult to solve on the way the political system works today and all the money in it. And it's something that the American people are going to have to address and supporting those who support the things that they believe in.

Margaret Flinter: Well, congressman we've always relied on strong leaders to help get us on the right course and we'd be remiss if we didn't give a shout out to one of the founder of Research America someone we're please to call a friend and colleague of ours here in Connecticut and that's former Governor Lowell Weicker and I know you share the same passion ---

John E Porter: Oh, Weicker was the first president and I believe the first chair of Research America and ---

Margaret Flinter: He was and another great and strong leader but, you know, whenever we might feel a tad discourage about just about anything we look to the young people around us in our communities in our organization who have such talent and such passion. And I think we are all committed to making sure that the educational system works for them to advance their interest and their talent for science and research and we wonder if you'd like to as a wrap up share and you thoughts about a vision for our education in the United States to helps promote those scientist of the future.

John E Porter: Young people are going to inherit the future of this country, and they have to care about public service serving in ways that they can be champions of the things that they believe in Lowell Weicker certainly was and always stood up and said this is what I believe in, I don't care if anybody doesn't agree with me. Those are the kinds of people that ought to be serving in public office and not those that put their finger in the wind and say, which way is the wind blowing I'm going to go that way. We need leaders and we work constantly to identify them for the future in congress and to get them committed through Research America to leadership and research. So, this is where I believe we need to emphasize them education where we need to put our

resources where young people are encouraged to have a career in science and where we need ultimately to have our society built up on evidence based decision making and getting away from the partisanship and posturing that passes for good governance today it isn't good government.

Mark Masselli: We have been speaking today with Former Congressman John E Porter Medical and Scientific Research Advocate and winner of the National Academy of Science as most prestigious award the 2014 public service award, you can learn more about the work by going to [ResearchAmerican.org](http://ResearchAmerican.org), congressman Porter thank you so much for joining us on conversations today.

John E Porter: Well, thank you Mark and Margaret.

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Mark Masselli: At Conversations on Health Care we want our audience to be truly in, the know, when it comes to the facts about Health Care reform and policy Lori Robertson is an award winning journalist and managing editor of [FactCheck.org](http://FactCheck.org) a nonpartisan, nonprofit consumer advocate for voters that aim to reduce the level of deception in U.S politics. Lori, what have you got for us this week?

Lori Robertson: Well, Representative Chris Van Holland recently claimed that the Affordable Care Act had significantly reduced the per-capita cost of health care. The per-capita cost is rising. Van Holland's office told us he meant that the ACA has significantly reduced the growth and cost. That's different in a matter of some debate. Per-capita health care cost have been rising slowly at just under 3% a year over the last four years. That's less than half the average annual growth in the previous eight years. Economists including those at the centers for Medicare and Medicaid services say the recession is the biggest reason for the slowdown in growth. CMS call the impact of the Affordable Care Act quite minimal. The White House council of economic advisors says health care cost would be 0.5% higher per year, if not for the health care law in their view and Van Holland's that's significant, that's a subjective call of course but how have the ACA affected to slowdown in cost growth. Well the council of economic advisors says the law trim payments to Medicare which reduce the growth of spending but also that reduction in Medicare spending have a spillover effect on overall health care spending. The CEO of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation also had said the law had an indirect impact but it's difficult to prove. He said it's likely the ACA has played a role in slowing cost growth because the health care market has historically responded to the threat of impending health reform. Voters should be aware that costs are rising but at a historically moderate pace. And that's my fact check for this week. I am Lori Robertson, Managing Editor of [FactCheck.org](http://FactCheck.org).

Margaret Flinter: [FactCheck.org](http://FactCheck.org) is committed to factual accuracy from the country's major political players and is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. If you have a fact that you would like checked, email us at

chcradio.com, we will have FactCheck.org's Lori Robertson check it out for you here on Conversations on Health Care.

Margaret Flinter: Each week, Conversations highlights a bright idea about how to make wellness a part of our communities and to everyday lives. Food labeling could be going one step further than simple calorie counts in the future. Public health researchers at the University of North Carolina have some pep in their step for another approach to getting consumers attention when pondering this food and beverage choices. There is growing interest in a new approach to displaying calorie counts next menu items. Instead, sure the amount of exercise that would be require to burn off those calories consume from drinking, say 20 ounce cola, they developed an icon symbolizing a person walking and how far that person would have to walk to erase the calories they are just about to consume. They conducted a randomize study to determine what, if any effect, the measure would have on consumer choices.

Dr. Anthony Viera: And we showed them basically a full menu with all items and so one group was randomized to no information except the food items. Another one was a menu of pretty much every item exact same way and it had the calories. And then a third option had calories plus minutes to walk without little figure and it had, you know, for example 91 minutes. And then finally a forth menu that showed the same exact things with the same exact figure with miles to walk, so I might say 5.1 miles.

Margaret Flinter: Dr. Anthony Viera, Professor at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Public Health. He said the study showed quite clearly that when consumer saw the consuming of food or drink item would require them to walk five miles to burn those calories off as opposed to just seeing the calories. It had a direct impact on the choice.

Dr. Anthony Viera: So if you looked at total calories ordered when you are shown no label, the average calories ordered 1020. When you are shown calories only, which is a you know sort of the current policy, the average order was 927 calories. And we're showing calories plus miles, the average order was 826 calories. So as you can see there was a definite decrease in calories when you shown calories plus miles.

Margaret Flinter: The results of the initial study were so conclusive. They are now scaling up their research to test it in restaurants. Restaurant food labeling showing a consumer how much exercise will be required to burn off the calories consumed, helping them comprehend the actual calorie value of the foods they choose and maybe that's positively impacting their intention to consume fewer calories more wisely. Now that's a bright idea.

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Margaret Flinter: This is Conversations on Health Care, I am Margaret Flinter.

Mark Masselli: And I am Mark Masselli. Peace and health.



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