

Too Big To Fail, Too Big to Know, and Too Big to Ignore

By: Jana Lynn Granillo

How does ACA affect me and my community? Well, that is a big question with a big answer. The ACA is big. It is more than the marketplace and mandates - which is still the law. It is a whole system of care, infrastructure and problem solving intended to make us healthier as a nation.

When I think of the ACA, what churns to the top of my thoughts are vulnerable populations, my neighbors, my own insurance and where I live.

When I hear students playing in the school yard, I know many are economically disadvantaged. We have a shockingly large percentage of students on the Free and Reduced Lunch program. How many of those children have AHCCS/Medicaid or participate in the ACA Marketplace?

When I commute, I drive by community healthcare centers, also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers. The ACA funding impacts these clinics.

When I shop for groceries, I see seniors counting their pennies with clipped coupons. How many seniors will endure a fall or become a victim to MRSA? How many of them are Medicare and Medicare dual eligibles?

When I hear a first responder siren, I think about behavioral health. According to a recent report on the opioid crisis, my community is on a data map and it is colored red. Does the siren tell of another victim? Does that victim have behavioral health options or even a treatment bed for evaluation?

What about treatment options? Is there a new medication on the horizon for a chronic condition or disease by the National Institute of Health? Will my elderly relative have to travel to Phoenix to get treatment that is not available in rural areas?

Will the county hospital financially be in the "green" this year or do we take a hit on our property taxes to support the district? Will we receive Disproportionate Share Payments for serving the underserved? What funding will be available?

What about all those medically served by the fire department, especially those who don't have a point of care? Who pays for that?

Finally, I ponder, will our family (employer) insurance be there tomorrow? I can't afford a premium without help.

So, does the ACA affect me, my family and my community? YES!

How do we proceed? We must include experts from multiple health disciplines to define reform around a common goal: affordable quality healthcare systems that is responsible, provides short term stabilization and long term solutions that protects all.