HealthCare.gov Needs More Than A Tech Surge

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The Affordable Care Act is off to a rocky start, to say the least.

Attention has been focused on HealthCare.gov, where those without employer-provided insurance can shop for health plans. Finger pointing abounds, with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and contractors blaming each other.

A story in the Wall Street Journal chronicles the debacle:

The contractors said each of their pieces worked more or less as intended, but the HealthCare.gov website was nearly paralyzed when they were bolted together. The federal agency overseeing the site also took on the job of integrating the many parts of the system—an unusual arrangement for such a complex project.

Testing of the complete package took place in the final two weeks before the launch and revealed problems, contractors said. But they couldn't name who in the government was responsible for addressing the problems or making key decisions.

It appears that the dozens of contractors were working on the site without a single entity "quarterbacking" the project.

Indeed, White House spokesperson Jay Carney was asked who was supervising the many moving parts. His response: "This is on us. And that goes from the president on down."

You mean the president, who didn't even appear to be aware of the problems of the site before going live?

Let's think of HealthCare.gov like the American patient.

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