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Editorials

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Universal health care is a daunting challenge

Most Americans are concerned about the shortcomings of health care in the United States, and about the number of people who do not have health insurance. Most of us would like to address these challenges.

The question is how, and answering that question has proved difficult.

On April 12, 2006, then-Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney signed a far-reaching experiment into law. It required all residents to carry a minimum amount of health insurance, required all who employed more than 10 people to provide health insurance or pay a penalty to the state, set up state subsidies to help families with incomes of as much as 300 percent of the poverty level buy insurance, and expanded eligibility for Medicaid.

As Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute pointed out, the Massachusetts plan pioneered the key elements of what the Obama administration proposes to do to provide "universal health care."

Early results suggest that Washington planners and the American people need to proceed carefully.

- Although Massachusetts has reduced the ranks of the uninsured, more than 200,000 people remain uninsured. Furthermore, more than 58 percent of the newly insured have subsidized health care paid for by taxpayers.

- Health care costs have risen much more rapidly than the national average. The reforms were expected to cut the price of individual insurance policies by 25 percent to 40 percent. Instead, health insurance premiums in Massachusetts have risen by 8 percent to 10 percent a year, almost double the national average.

- The plan was projected to cost about \$1.56 billion a year, with state subsidies accounting for \$725 million of that. Not even close. The state secretary of administration expects the actual cost of the state subsidy alone to approach \$1 billion.

- Total state spending on health care has risen by 42 percent since 1996.

Lots of good people, on both sides of the aisle, are applying their brains to the problem of how to insure more Americans. They are to be congratulated for their efforts.

As the Massachusetts experiment shows, it is not going to be easy - or cheap.

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Not So Fast (11 minutes ago)

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Universal health care works in every other industrialized nation, preventing the burden on pension and retirement plans of business (and government alike) allowing those countries to be competitive on a global scale in a difficult economy. Access to health care is even considered a human right. Why we don't have universal health care here is the greed heads and usury of the insurance and pharmaceutical industries and the big red scare by the American Medical Association. If not universal health care now, then how about some of that gum'mint regulation to keep the obscene health care price increases in check? Oh, that's right, big pharma is the MBA Governors daughter - so we won't get any of that relief here in West by God Virginia. We don't seem to concerned about peoples rights here in WV, just corporate welfare for Joe's pals and family members.

Libtard (1 hour ago)

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Hawaii also tried universal health care out and dropped out after one year it was such a disaster.

But that narcissitic Obama is going to make it work for 300,000,000 Americans and millions of illegal aliens.

Moron.