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More Vague GOP Health Care Ideas

Peter Suderman | February 16, 2010

Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty is the latest GOP smarty-pants to insist via major daily op-ed that, when it comes to health care, Republicans really do have ideas. More than one, even! Still, one wonders if the supply has dwindled recently: Unlike similar pieces by Bobby Jindal and Newt Gingrich and John Goodman, each of which proposed 10 ideas, Pawlenty's *Washington Post* piece only has five. Maybe they're really good?



Sadly, no. As with previous Republican offerings on the topic of health care, it's at best a mixed bag—far too vague and far too dependent on regulation and bureaucratic tweaking to solve problems. "Modernize health insurance"? Government-set performance metrics for health care providers? As Cato health policy analyst Michael Cannon points out in an excellent point-by-point rundown (worth reading in full!), it's not clear what Pawlenty means by all of his suggestions, nor even that Pawlenty really knows. With this op-ed, what Pawlenty, like any number of Republican politicians before him (Paul Ryan being the notable exception), has proven once again is not that the Republican party has a strong, clear command of health care policy, but that, at least so far, it doesn't.