

## Democrats sneaky little single-payer health care gimmicks

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Democrats in Congress, aware of how unimpressed Americans are about their health care plans, keep coming up with different terminology in an effort to push through their program. They, like Obama, think that if they use pseudonyms instead of the actual words, Americans are so stupid that they can't see through their gimmicks.



Patients waiting line/AP photo

The latest is that of establishing health "insurance" co-operatives. In reality, it is a completely meaningless construct or simply camouflage for the "Public Plan" option, no matter what Senator Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), ever the compromiser, calls it.

What is a "co-op"? The Cato Institute describes it as

A "co-op" can be defined as a business owned and controlled by its workers and the people who use its services, in this case presumably the people whom it insures. In that sense, government provision of some sort of legal framework or seed money to help establish health insurance co-ops seems relatively harmless but also relatively pointless. This is not really about creating more choices and competition.

Actually health care co-ops already exist. Health Partners, Inc. in Minneapolis has 660,000 members and provides health care, health insurance and HMO coverage. The Group Health Cooperative in Seattle provides health coverage for 10 percent of Washington State residents. PacAdvantage, a California co-op, covers 147,000 people. By all accounts the people insured through these co-ops are happy with their choice. But there is no evidence that they are significantly less expensive or more efficient than other insurers.

However, the sneaky little gimmick is that in the Congressional program, co-op officers and directors would be appointed by the President and Congress, would be a national co-op, and not independent of government control. Congress would set the rules under which it operates.

In the words of Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont) it means that it would just be the single-payer plan that the Democrats have been pushing all along. He says

It's got to be written in a way that accomplishes the objectives of a public option.

Michael Tanner, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute writes:

If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck.

If a "co-op" is run by the federal government under rules imposed by the federal government with funding provided by the federal government, it's simply government-run health insurance by another name. Opponents of a government takeover of the health care system should not be fooled.

To read the entire article, go to

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