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Health Care Debate Heats Up

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The rush to health care reform is heating up the debate finally, with the [AMA jumping into the fray](#) over the last couple of days.

Poll numbers indicate Americans favor government “involvement” to reduce costs and expand coverage by some 72%, but when asked if the government should provide the coverage, that number shrinks to a still compelling 60% ([CNN Source](#)).

I’m firmly in the minority, and I believe as the proposals make their way into the public’s consciousness, the poll numbers will move. The devil, it is said, is in the details.

One proposal that appears attractive is the idea of legislation empowering “co-ops”, where physicians and patients form their own non-profit organizations to negotiate for the best rates from providers. Democratic Senators Max Bachus and Charles Grassley have both [supported the idea](#).

But that option already exists in most states, with some very large co-ops already out there. As medical analyst [Michael D. Tanner](#) at Cato.org notes:

It is suggested that the “co-ops” would be nonprofits, and therefore would offer better service and lower costs. But many insurance companies, including “mutual” insurers and many “Blues,” are already nonprofit companies. Furthermore, states already have the power to charter co-ops, including health insurance co-ops. In fact, 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.

Tanner points out that the co-op sounds like a market-based solution, yet we find Democrats like Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) declaring that the co-op would be a single, national co-op with Congress writing the rules. Not market based at all.

And while fair and open debate is the hallmark of modern representative democracies, the Democrats seem

intent on pushing health care reform through without it (from [Roll Call](#), with a H/T to [Gateway Pundit](#)):

Top aides to Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) called a last-minute, pre-emptive strike on Wednesday with a group of prominent Democratic lobbyists, warning them to advise their clients not to attend a meeting with Senate Republicans set for Thursday.

I hope the Democrats find this task to be the equivalent of [Siphysus' rock and roll effort](#).

[Frank Politics](#)

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