



Universal healthcare 'a recipe for breaking the bank'

Pete Chagnon - OneNewsNow - 6/11/2009 7:00:00 AM



A senior fellow with the Cato Institute says a lesson on healthcare can be learned from Massachusetts' mistakes -- and a Heritage Foundation expert says American families have a lot at stake in the healthcare debate.

As the Obama administration prepares to push through a national healthcare program, the [Cato Institute's](#) Michael Tanner says some important lessons can be learned from Massachusetts' foray into socialized medicine. The Bay State passed its healthcare reforms in 2006 and, according to Tanner, is frequently referenced as a "blueprint" for national healthcare. But since its implementation, healthcare costs in that state have risen faster than the national average. Government regulations have limited consumer choice -- and Tanner says despite tax increases, the program faces huge deficits.

"Well, I think one of the most important things we can learn from this is that attempts to get universal coverage -- that is, to get a piece of paper in everyone's hands that says that they have health insurance -- without doing anything about the underlying cost drivers in healthcare are a recipe for breaking the bank," he contends.



Tanner

Tanner believes the price tag on national healthcare could be as high as \$1.7 trillion. He says to cover this cost, Democrats are considering a tax on soft drinks and beer, eliminating health savings accounts and flex plans, and new taxes on businesses.

According to Tanner, even with all that new revenue they will still fall short by about 50 percent. And he says currently no one knows where that extra 50 percent will come from.

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Meanwhile, the *Associated Press* reports that not long after Obama scolded Congress on borrowing, he now says it is acceptable to borrow in order to fund healthcare -- to the tune of tens of billions of dollars. ([Listen to audio report](#))



Dennis Smith of [The Heritage Foundation](#) contends there are a number of concerns with Obama's healthcare plan. No one knows what the plan is, he points out, and nobody knows where the money is going to come from.



Smith also is concerned that the legislation is being pushed through too quickly with very little debate.

"The American families have so much at stake at this discussion -- and to have this basically pushed through with very little time to assess what the true impact is, I think, is a real disservice to the American people," he says.

Smith fears that the intent of Obama's healthcare plan is to eventually get rid of any private health insurance and put everyone on the government plan -- something he believes lawmakers have, in fact, stated is their goal.



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