

Socialized healthcare - one way or another

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A healthcare policy analyst says Democratic leaders in Congress are playing "rope a dope" with opponents of their healthcare bill, knowing full well that if they don't succeed in passing a public option they can still socialize healthcare with an individual mandate.



An analysis by congressional budget experts finds the cost of the House healthcare bill is \$1.2 trillion or more over a decade -- \$300 billion more than the price tag that has been given by President Barack Obama and Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-California).

Michael Cannon, director of health policy studies at the [Cato Institute](#), says the essence of the legislation is an individual mandate that would require all Americans to purchase health insurance and a new government program that would nationalize healthcare slowly over time.

Cannon notes that Massachusetts is already demonstrating that an individual mandate effectively socializes the healthcare sector.



Cannon

"We can see that happening in Massachusetts," he explains. "They're not only telling people that they have to buy more coverage, but state government in Massachusetts is using that power to dictate the relationships between insurance companies and doctors.

"They're [also] using it to dictate how doctors and hospitals organize their practices -- they want to force them into larger group practices," he continues. "And there are also hints that Massachusetts is going to start using that power to dictate how doctors practice medicine."

Cannon believes Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nevada) have included the public option ("Fannie Med") in their bills because they want opponents to spend all of their time attacking it instead of an individual mandate -- which he argues is all Democrats need to nationalize healthcare.

The analyst predicts Democrats will pull the public option from the bill and try to pass an individual mandate when opponents are exhausted from their fight against the public option.