

Patient Power

Because your health care is too important to be left to politicians.

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Tony Soprano and the “public plan”

June 25th, 2009 | by Brian Schwartz |



If a government [health insurance] program were to be stripped of any special advantages it would cease to be a government program. It would be just another private insurer. Take away the violence and intimidation, and Tony Soprano is just an eccentric and earthy businessman. - [Michael Cannon](#), Cato Institute

Here's his reasoning (emphasis added):

Consider what would be necessary to create and sustain a level playing field between government and private insurers.

First, a new government program would have to be **completely self-financing**. No special subsidies for start-up costs or operating costs, and it would have to maintain real reserves just like private insurers.

Second, Congress could not **leverage its market power** to favor a government program by adopting Medicare's payment rates or requiring providers to participate as a condition of Medicare participation.

Third, Congress and federal bureaucrats cannot be allowed to enact any **regulations favoring the new program** either deliberately or inadvertently. That means there cannot be even an *implicit* guarantee that the government would bail itself out.

Fourth, **no future Congress and no future bureaucrats** can be allowed to do any of these things, ever.

These conditions will never be satisfied because public-plan supporters do not want them to be. Indeed, they want to violate every single of them from the get-go. They want a new program to

build on Medicare's infrastructure, to use Medicare's payment rates, and to receive special subsidies.

Read the whole piece here: [A Level Playing Field? Don't Make Me Laugh](#). For more details, see Michael Cannon's presentation from earlier this year (video, audio, and slides) [here](#).

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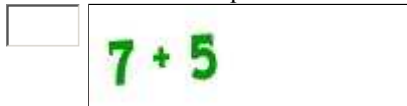
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