

Ready to buy socialized med?

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We often hear politicians speak of "47 million" Americans who reportedly do not have medical insurance. Some of them are young and healthy and prefer to spend their money for other things instead of health insurance. And surely, some just can't afford medical insurance. That's why we have expensive Medicaid for the medically indigent.

But with the Obama administration pushing for a great increase in socialized or "government" medicine that would cost more than a trillion dollars, who do you think will be called upon to pay for it?

A Congressional Budget Office report says about 23 million people are losing the health insurance they have. The Cato Institute said the result, as estimated by Lewin Associates, is that as many as 118.5 million people would shift from private health insurance to government insurance, resulting in huge additional costs to taxpayers. There would be a reduction of nearly 60 percent in the number of Americans with private medical insurance. Or more?

The Cato Institute says this means, "We are facing some of the most sweeping changes health care has seen in decades. Reform is needed, but increasing government control over one-sixth of the economy and over important personal and private decisions would harm American taxpayers, health care providers and patients."

We do not want anyone who really needs any medical attention to be denied it. But it cannot be provided without cost. And shifting the cost from personal and employer financing to the government -- which has a national debt of \$11.4 trillion and is running billions of dollars in the red annually -- is not an encouraging prospect for an added cost in the trillion-dollar-plus range.

The Cato Institute also warns that "More than 200 million Americans have public or employer-controlled coverage, and all are essentially purchasing it with someone's else's money. And that's the problem. Americans demand more coverage than they would if they were spending their own money. In fact, we demand as much coverage as Canadians, for whom health care patients pay only about 14 cents for every dollar of medical care they consume.

"... If we want to increase access to health care, our first priority must be to contain costs. Nothing would help more than 200 million cost-conscious consumers.

"Letting Americans own their health care dollars is the right thing to do. And as it happens, it would also cover a lot of the uninsured."

Unfortunately, however, the Obama administration and the Democrat majority in Congress are headed in nearly the opposite direction -- wanting more government medicine, with huge added costs, which would mean increased taxes and/or more astronomical national debt.

Can we accept that cost without disastrous economic consequences for us all?

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