

Mass. malpractice spreads

By Michael Graham | Friday, October 16, 2009 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | Op-Ed

What part of "It's not working" don't they understand?

As arrogant Washington liberals and the Obama administration (but I repeat myself) prepare to foist a government-run health care system onto the rest of America, we're watching the wheels come off the same program here in Massachusetts. But nobody - other than Bay Staters getting stuck with the system - seems to be paying attention.

Wendy Williams of Cape Cod wrote a piece for The Wall Street Journal last week telling our story to the world. She and her husband have had health insurance for years, but Massachusetts arbitrarily ordered them to buy more coverage or pay a \$1,000 tax.

She reminded that just like President Obama and Democrats today, "(Former Gov. Mitt) Romney and Sen. Ted Kennedy publicly promised that the middle class - that is, people like us - would not be taxed and that our health-care costs would actually decrease if the [Mass.] plan became law."

Today, they're one of thousands of middle-class Bay State families who've been hit with a \$1,000 tax bill - not for being uninsured, but for not being insured the way Gov. **Deval Patrick** wants them to be.

"The mandate in Massachusetts was sold as something that wouldn't penalize people like my husband and me," Williams concluded. "But those political promises were only good for as long as it took to get the mandate enacted into law."

Paying attention, Sen. Olympia Snowe?

And while the president and his allies scream bloody murder anytime their critics say "rationing," at The Boston Globe-Democrat they're writing stories like this:

"Controlling Massachusetts' soaring medical costs, many health care leaders believe, may require residents to give up their nearly unlimited freedom to go to any hospital and specialist they want."

"'You can't reap these savings without limiting patients' choices in some way,' said Paul Levy, chief executive of Beth **Israel** Deaconess Medical Center."

Hmmm . . . "giving up freedom" and "limiting choices." Gee, if only there were a simple word to describe a situation where a public system does all these things to sick people. Something starting with an R?

And then there's the cost question. Democrats also claim the Baucus bill will pay for itself, and that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says so, too.

But no Bay Stater is dumb enough to fall for that one again. Other than our elected officials, that is.

First of all, the Baucus bill math is bogus on its face. The accounting trick - if you can call something a "trick" when it's spelled out in the bill - is that the new taxes and fees kick in as soon as Obama signs it, but the bill doesn't fully take effect until 2017. So sure, it's deficit neutral, as long as you get years of taxes before you start spending real money.

Is this news in Massachusetts? Hardly.

As Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute pointed out, "The cost of the [Massachusetts] program has exploded; it's running \$150 million above the original projection for this year alone." And that was in 2007 - the first full year the plan was in place. This year, according to Rep. Jeff Perry (R-Sandwich), the total "health reform" cost will be \$1 billion.

Liberals whined that the Bush administration was anti-science. Well, we've got a health-care experiment going on in Massachusetts, and it's going horribly wrong. And yet, as this massive, taxpayer-killing monster lurches off the lab table, Dr. Obama is still planning to use the same formula.

Time to grab the pitchforks, folks.

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