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## Mitt Romney's Achilles heel

by [Rossputin](#) | 4:34 am, March 18, 2010

As Obamacare hurtles toward possible (probable?) passage, national revulsion against the cost, intrusiveness, and impact of government-run health insurance poses a serious threat to the presidential ambitions of Mitt Romney.

Romney, as governor of Massachusetts, was responsible for implementing Commonwealth Care, the closest thing in the nation to Obamacare.

Massachusetts not only has the highest health insurance premiums in the nation, it also has the fastest rising premiums in the nation. And Boston has, by far, the [longest wait in the nation to see a doctor](#).

The plan is costing the state billions of dollars and is more than \$100MM overbudget this year because the vast majority of new insured in Massachusetts pay little or nothing for their insurance. They simply steal money from taxpayers to pay for it. How does that "health care is a right" feel now?

Now the [state is already cutting services and blocking or delaying insurance coverage](#) for many of its residents – especially its poorest – in order to stem the fiscal hemorrhaging caused by their version of ObamaCare. No wonder Massachusetts voters believe by a large ratio that Commonwealth Care has damaged the quality of health care in the state.

Romney offers three main excuses for his support of one of the left's major goals: First, that his plan is substantially different from ObamaCare. Second, that his successor, the soon-to-be-ex-governor Deval Patrick, implemented the plan differently from how Romney would have. Third, that these sorts of plans should be implemented at the state level and there is no appropriate federal role in health insurance.

Let's discuss:

Romney's claim that his plan is very different from Obama's just doesn't pass the giggle test. As the [Boston Herald notes](#) "(T)he basic elements of Obamacare are all there: an individual mandate that nearly

everyone buy insurance; subsidized insurance based on income; a non-insurance “tax” and employer mandates. The Cato Institute calls it a mirror-image of Obamacare.” (The rather thorough gutting of Commonwealth Care by Cato’s Michael Cannon can be found [HERE](#), including noting that the system costs over \$20,000 per year to insure a family of four.)

No doubt that Patrick made the system worse. But if a doctor intentionally give a patient a bad disease, it’s hard to then place a lot of blame on a different doctor who doesn’t implement the best treatment. What’s killing the patient is the fact that he was intentionally sickened. As if to prove the point, the Massachusetts system is frequently called RomneyCare...not PatrickCare.

Where Romney has a grain of truth to his claims is his federalism argument. He is right that in the spirit of states as laboratories of democracy, almost all legislation (i.e. all that isn’t authorized by the Constitution) should be at the state level. But he has problems here, too.

First, someone who poisons a state can’t be called a hero for not poisoning the whole country. Second, the fact of a Republican supporting a “mirror-image of Obamacare” gives cover to liberals who want to push this disaster on the nation; they can say “look how this prominent pro-business Republican thought it was a good idea.” Third, in the vein of “if you’re explaining, you’re losing”, Romney’s argument is simply too subtle to be effective with a population of voters almost none of whom could explain the 9th and 10th Amendments to you.

In a sense, one could say that Romney did the nation a favor by passing Commonwealth Care so that only the people of his state would have to suffer while the rest of us could see socialized medicine’s consequences. Unfortunately, most of the nation (and certainly most Democrats in Congress) have not paid attention to the RomneyCare woes. Perhaps Americans aren’t smart enough to learn from the mistakes of others. After all, if we were, lessons of Canada and Britain would have prevented the implementation of RomneyCare to begin with, not to mention the oncoming freight train of ObamaCare.

All of this is already turning into a major headache for Mitt Romney. In the last few days, he’s been through some rough [questioning by Fox News’ Chris Wallace](#) (start around 1:10 mark in this [video](#) – also embedded below – in which Romney neatly makes every excuse), he’s been hit with an extremely critical WSJ opinion piece by the Galen Institute’s Grace-Marie Turner entitled “[The Failure of RomneyCare](#)“, and he’s seen his plan blasted by Massachusetts’ State Treasurer, Tim Cahill, as explained in James Antle’s “[The Masscare Massacre](#)“. It’s interesting to note that Cahill, a former Democrat, is running for Governor as an independent – by running against socialized medicine in the most liberal state in the union. The lesson of Scott Brown’s election isn’t lost on him even as it goes unnoticed or at least ignored by Nancy Pelosi and Barack Obama.

In political betting, Romney’s chances of being the Republican nominee for President in 2012 have been fairly steady around 24-25% for several months, with Sarah Palin just barely behind, trading around 23%. Romney has a substantial advantage among the likely contenders because of his well-known expertise in business and his experience as an executive. But to the extent that the economy stabilizes and health care increases in prominence as an issue, the public may come to wonder whether a career of many smart decisions is more important than Romney’s apparent failure on the biggest policy question in a generation.



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