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Voters aren't buying cost control promises on Obamacare

By: JULIE MASON Examiner White House Correspondent March 12, 2010

President Obama's opening pitch for his health care plan was a promise to save American consumers money. A year later, they're still not buying it.

A complicated and shifting White House message strategy, an intense, election-year atmosphere of public distrust, and conflicting claims about savings have undermined Obama's efforts to win support for the plan.

"The message up until now has been inordinately complex," said John F. Wasik, author of "The Audacity of Help: Obama's Economic Plan and the Remaking of America."

When Obama first outlined his health care reform proposals, a centerpiece of the plan was a promise to reduce premiums by \$2,500 a year for a typical family.

The ensuing debate has frequently eclipsed that original message, as the White House repackaged its plan as a way to cut the deficit, a blow against greedy insurers, a moral imperative to cover the uninsured, a government-run program and more.

Wasik said the administration's efforts to sell health care legislation with the argument that doing nothing would cause the deficit to increase, and then talking about health care costs as a percentage of the gross domestic product, missed the point for many Americans.

"People don't relate to that," Wasik said. "When the main message is lost, people say, 'What is this? What are you selling us?'"

Another factor hurting Obama's messaging is the tart anti-government attitude among voters this year. Exacerbated by slow improvements in the economy, the standard American mistrust of elected officials is intensified and directing itself at Obama's massive health care effort.

A Rasmussen Reports poll earlier this week found 53 percent of respondents oppose Obama's health care plan, while 57 percent said they believe it will hurt the economy.

Worse still for Obama, 81 percent in the Rasmussen poll said they believe it is at least somewhat likely the plan will cost more than advertised. That figure includes 66 percent

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who say it's very likely that official projections are artificially low.

"His campaign promise was that reform would reduce costs by \$2,500 per family, and this doesn't come close to that," said Michael Cannon, a health policy expert at the libertarian Cato Institute. "There is ample reason for the American public to be suspicious of these claims and to reject them outright."

A new survey of employers by the National Business Group on Health finds companies increasingly frustrated by employees' lax attitudes about their own health and planning to shift more costs to workers in the future.

At the White House, press secretary Robert Gibbs noted that consumers are starting to see their annual insurance costs go up -- a development he believes has "crystallized" public understanding of the administration's message.

"You heard the mantra of let's not do this now, let's start over," Gibbs said. "These insurance companies are not starting over, right? They're not pushing pause on a health insurance increase of 40 percent or 39 percent when health care inflation is going up 4 or 5 percent."

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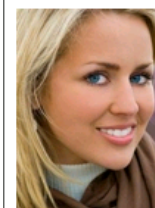


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Guy Jones 7 hours ago

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Even Obama's gilded tongue can't put a positive gloss on the abject turd that is the Obamacare legislation. The liberal pied piper's flute is out of tune and the electorate is waking up (that is, everyone except the clueless liberals who still swoon for Obama). Everyone else who possesses an ounce of common sense is opposed to this bill and the corrupt connivance by which the Dems are attempting to pass it.

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Since over the years they stole S.S. and Medicare funds...no one believes that this plan is nothing more, than another pot of money for them to dig into.

They ought to prove their integrity, and start beefing up S.S. and Medicare and stop spending our money on the ARTS, LaRaza, birds, bees, frogs, turtles, foreign aid, illegal aliens.....

And stop banning drilling for our own oil...natural gas...and stop banning coal mining permits!

Fix what's broken now....don't start something new that is already broken!

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