

## “Would ObamaCare Reduce Innovation?”: Health Care Bill Would Cause Preventable Deaths

Posted By [Hans Bader](#) On November 30, 2009 @ 1:53 pm In [Health and Illness](#), [Healthcare](#), [Insurance](#), [Labor](#), [Legal](#), [Personal Liberty](#), [Politics as Usual](#), [Precaution & Risk](#), [Regulation](#), [Sanctimony](#) | [1 Comment](#)

“Would ObamaCare Kill Medical Innovation?” That’s the question posed by health care expert Michael Cannon. His [answer is yes](#) <sup>[1]</sup>: “President Obama’s health plan would likely reduce such innovation, to the detriment of the entire world.”

Other experts agree. Harvard Medical School’s Dean said the health care bills backed by Obama would reduce “[our capacity to innovate and develop new therapies](#) <sup>[2]</sup>” that save lives.

England’s government-run NHS health care system results in “[10,000 unnecessary cancer deaths](#) <sup>[3]</sup>” every year. “[Hundreds of patients died needlessly at an NHS hospital due to appalling care.](#)” <sup>[4]</sup>

That is just the tip of the iceberg in what ObamaCare will cost our society. It would also raise taxes, deficits, and medical costs.

As I noted earlier, the Senate recently [voted 60-to-39](#) <sup>[5]</sup>, along party lines, to press towards passage of a massive health care bill, blocking a Republican filibuster.

Afterward, however, the bill drew criticism even from moderate Democrats who usually support the Obama administration, which backs the bill. Veteran *Washington Post* editorialist David Broder [called the bill](#) <sup>[6]</sup> a “budget buster in the making,” saying it will violate President Obama’s “pledge that health insurance reform will not add to our federal budget deficit over the next decade.” He pleaded with the Obama administration and Congress not to “pass along unfunded programs to our children and grandchildren.”

In the *Examiner*, a Democrat who backed Obama in 2008 criticized the administration for backing a health care bill that violates Obama’s campaign promises by raising taxes on the middle class, citing the bill’s many tax increases, such as its [tax on uninsured](#) <sup>[7]</sup> people and [taxes on cosmetic surgery](#) <sup>[8]</sup> and other medical procedures.

Earlier, Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen (D) criticized ObamaCare for driving up state spending and budget deficits, calling it “[the mother of all unfunded mandates](#) <sup>[9]</sup>.”

*Washington Post* columnist Robert Samuelson today called ObamaCare a [generational rip-off](#) <sup>[10]</sup>. Earlier, he noted that the health care bill is “[hypocritical](#) <sup>[11]</sup>” and “[dishonest](#) <sup>[11]</sup>” and aggravates the worst features of the “[status quo](#) <sup>[11]</sup>.”

In the Senate, all Democrats voted for the bill. But many [received payoffs](#) <sup>[12]</sup> for doing so. And there really are no “moderate” Democrats left in the Senate: most of its so-called “moderate” Democrats are not moderate or conservative on anything except on a handful of social issues needed to survive in a “red state,” like gun control. No Senate Democrat today deviates from the liberal party line as often as the moderate Democrats who once served in the Senate, like Senators Alan Dixon of Illinois and J. James Exon of Nebraska.

As I noted on Saturday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) lined up the 60 votes through [payoffs](#) <sup>[12]</sup> to wavering Senators and powerful unions (some mismanaged unions will receive a [taxpayer bailout](#) <sup>[12]</sup> of their health plans, to the tune of up to \$10 billion).

The Dean of Harvard Medical School recently gave Obama’s health care plan a “[failing grade](#) <sup>[2]</sup>,” [saying](#) <sup>[2]</sup> it will harm America’s health and finances, and hamper medical innovations needed to save patients’ lives. Dean Jeffrey S. Flier wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* that along “with dozens of health-care leaders and economists,” he had concluded that the bill “will markedly accelerate national

health-care spending,” would harm care “by overregulating the health-care system in the service of special interests such as insurance companies,” and would reduce “our capacity to innovate and develop new therapies” that save lives.

Other experts agree. The health care “reform” bill backed by President Obama “[would reduce senior care](#) <sup>[13]</sup>,” increase “[medical costs](#) <sup>[14]</sup>,” and “could jeopardize access to care for millions,” report [health care experts](#) <sup>[15]</sup> at the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The House recently [passed a similar bill](#) <sup>[16]</sup> by the razor-thin margin of 220 to 215.

The bill will [raise taxes](#) <sup>[17]</sup> on the middle class. It will [increase taxes](#) <sup>[18]</sup> on individuals, employers, and hospitals, [impose new taxes](#) <sup>[19]</sup> on medical devices and cosmetic surgery, and levy a 40% tax on health-care plans above \$8,500. It will [increase the deficit](#) <sup>[20]</sup>, drive up [state government spending](#) <sup>[21]</sup>, and cost taxpayers at least [twice as much](#) <sup>[19]</sup> as predicted. It is one of the most expensive bills of all time.

It contains special-interest pork, such as [payoffs for trial lawyers](#) <sup>[22]</sup>, and [racial preferences](#) <sup>[23]</sup> that drew criticism from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The bill restricts national competition in health insurance, which [is permitted](#) <sup>[24]</sup> in countries with cheaper health care.

ObamaCare spends money on frills like “[cultural competency](#) <sup>[25]</sup>,” while [cutting spending on crucial things like anesthesia](#) <sup>[26]</sup>.

“ObamaCare is all about rationing <sup>[27]</sup>,” and [tax increases](#) <sup>[28]</sup>, says one of Obama’s [own economic advisers](#) <sup>[29]</sup>, Martin Feldstein.

Fact-checkers say Obama is [lying about health care](#) <sup>[30]</sup>. Obama often contradicts himself. In the very same speech, [Obama claimed](#) <sup>[31]</sup> that Medicare is “unsustainable” and “running out of money,” then contradicted himself by claiming that “Medicare is a government program that works really well,” making it a model for national health care.

CNN [noted](#) <sup>[32]</sup> that Obama’s plan would [take away “5 freedoms](#) <sup>[33]</sup>,” contradicting Obama’s claim that the bill will leave you free to choose your doctor and keep your health care plan without government interference.

The bill does nothing to curb [massive waste and fraud](#) <sup>[34]</sup> in existing government health care systems like Medicare and Medicaid, even though it proposes to make massive cuts in Medicare (cuts so painful that most of them will never happen: year after year, [Congress waives](#) <sup>[35]</sup> “the annual cut in fees paid by Medicare to physicians” mandated by an earlier law. The cuts were added to the bill only to reduce its apparent cost. As economist and former Congressional Budget Office director Douglas Holtz-Eakin [notes in The Wall Street Journal](#) <sup>[36]</sup>, the promised cuts to pay for ObamaCare will not happen: “Senate Democrats chose to ignore this reality and rely on the promise of a cut to make their bill add up. Taking note of this fact . . . destroys any pretense of budget balance.”)

Backers of ObamaCare have refused to cut medical costs through malpractice reform, with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid saying that such reforms would [save “only” \\$54 billion](#) <sup>[37]</sup>. The Pacific Research Institute estimates that just one type of cost that could be reduced through malpractice-lawsuit reform — defensive medicine — costs around \$200 billion annually (which is almost as much as France spends annually on health care for all of its citizens; like most countries, France has no punitive damages, and fewer lawsuits against doctors).

One reform opposed by the Democrats — setting up specialized health tribunals to hear malpractice cases — would be particularly helpful. Replacing uninformed juries with specialized health courts would provide more [consistent rulings](#) <sup>[38]</sup> from case to case, eliminate meritless cases, reduce [defensive medicine](#) <sup>[38]</sup>, and more [speedily](#) <sup>[38]</sup> compensate injured people who truly are victimized by doctors’ carelessness. Such tribunals already exist in countries like “[Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and New Zealand](#) <sup>[38]</sup>.”

Martin Feldstein, one of Obama’s own [advisors](#) <sup>[29]</sup>, has said that Obama’s health care plan would explode the federal budget deficit and lead to “[crippling deficits](#) <sup>[39]</sup>,” as well as “higher taxes, debt payments, and interest rates” that would [cut](#) <sup>[39]</sup> America’s standard of living. Feldstein also noted that Obama’s health care plan would [harm people](#) <sup>[28]</sup> with insurance, and predicted that it would

lead to massive [tax increases](#) [28]. Other analysts have predicted that it will [drive up medical costs and inflation](#) [40].

Obama has relied on [\\$2 trillion in imaginary savings](#) [41] to pay for healthcare “reform.”

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