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## Opting-Out Would Be "Political Suicide" For States Says Health Care Analyst

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By Laura Smith – University of New Mexico/Talk Radio News Service

Michael Cannon, Director of Health Policy Studies at the CATO Institute, said today that it would be "political suicide" for states to choose to opt-out of the public option plan.

Democrats in Congress, led by Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), are pushing for an opt-out provision within the public option, or government-run health insurance plan, as a way to demonstrate to states that they will not be forced to partake in the plan.

Referring to the public option plan as "Fannie Med," Cannon said that Reid and others are using the opt-out provision as a way of putting pressure on states to subscribe.

"The taxpayers in each state are going to have to be subsidizing Fannie Med. And what Governor or state official is going to say 'I know your tax dollars are subsidizing this government program, but I'm not going to let you get your tax dollars back by participating in this program?' That would be political suicide for state officials. And supporters of Fannie Med know it would be political suicide," Cannon said.

Cannon argued that supporters of an opt-out provision are merely interested in finding way for the government to seize more control of the nation's healthcare system, and nothing more.

"They are counting on this to get their proposal through Congress and they know that it's not going to inhibit the new government program's ability to drive private insurers out of business," Cannon said.

Cannon said even proponents of the public option plan are aware that it would crush competition in the marketplace, and echoed the theory that President Barack Obama favors the public option plan because it would lead to single-payer health insurance in the U.S.

"What they call public option is not really a public option. That's a ruse," he said.

**October 27, 2009**

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