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Democrats 'go with three bad ideas'

Jim Brown - OneNewsNow - 12/11/2009 7:00:00 AM



A leading health economist says Senate Democrats' alternative to the controversial "public option" will not only reduce income to hospitals, but it will also drive up the cost of healthcare for senior citizens.

Senate Democrats are promoting a revised healthcare bill that would expand Medicare by allowing people 55 and older to "buy in" to the entitlement for seniors. The legislation would also expand access to Medicaid and create a non-profit, private insurance option overseen by the federal Office of Personnel Management comparable to the current health plan for government workers.

Michael Tanner, a senior fellow with the [Cato Institute](#) in Washington, D.C., says the Democrats seem to have decided that if one bad idea was not working, they should go with three bad ideas.



Tanner finds that there is not much reason to believe this compromise will come together, but if it does, he explains that "it would essentially squeeze private insurance from the top and bottom, moving seniors into the government-run Medicare program at enormous cost, move poor folks, the working poor primarily, into Medicaid, and then create a government-supervised, very expensive insurance plan in the middle."

The senior fellow says senior citizens will be hurt the most by the Senate proposal because with the Medicare "buy in," the people who sign up for the program are likely to be more unhealthy than the general population, which means that they are going to cost more to treat and that will drive up costs for the whole program. Tanner predicts seniors will end up having to pay higher premiums in order offset that cost.



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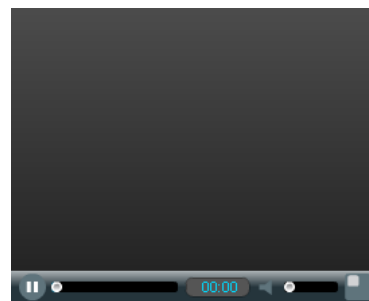


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