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# The same rotten Rx

## ObamaCare – now with GOP sprinkles!

By MICHAEL TANNER  
Last Updated: 4:20 AM, March 4, 2010  
Posted: 12:56 AM, March 4, 2010  
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If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try, try again.

With Plans A, B and C having failed miserably, **President Obama** yesterday unveiled his latest "new and improved" version of health-care reform. He says that this incarnation "incorporates the best ideas from Democrats and Republicans -- including some of the ideas that Republicans offered during the health-care summit." Unfortunately, its fundamental premise remains exactly the same -- a government takeover of the health-care system.

Start with those "Republican ideas": Though mostly not bad, they're hardly game changing.



President Obama: Still insisting that government knows best.

\* Increase the financial incentives for states to experiment with malpractice reform by \$50 million. Wow -- a million dollars per state! *That* undoubtedly has the trial lawyers quaking in their boots.

\* Undercover stings to help root out Medicare and Medicaid fraud. Fine -- but when fighting fraud in government programs becomes a major concession, it shows just how out of touch Washington has become.

\* Increase Medicare reimbursements. OK, higher spending for a program that's already going broke may well be a Republican idea, but it doesn't exactly make Obama's better.

\* Allow health-savings accounts to be sold through the government-sponsored exchanges. This *could* be a positive step -- but the details are key, and they remain to be seen.

HSAs have been proven to reduce the cost of health care and have added nearly 3 million people to the ranks of the insured since their inception. But they only really work in conjunction with high-deductible insurance -- if your policy already pays for everything, there's not much point to saving for health expenses.

And every version of ObamaCare to date has restricted high-deductible insurance and/or mandated low-deductible policies. Unless the president is prepared to make *major* changes in those areas, the HSA



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concession is just bait-and-switch.

All in all, saying that these changes represent a "compromise" with Republicans is a bit like saying that Yankee speedster Brett Gardner is a home-run hitter. It's technically true (he hit three dingers last year), but no one's going to mistake him for [Babe Ruth](#).

The president has also touted the new plan as "smaller" and "leaner." Smaller and leaner than *what*? This version may actually cost more than the last one -- breaking the \$1 trillion mark even under the [White House's](#) rosy assumptions.

At its heart, ObamaCare hasn't changed. It still represents a top-down, centralized, command-and-control approach to reform.

The government would require everyone to have health insurance, would determine what benefits that insurance must include, would regulate insurance prices and physician reimbursement *and* would micromanage how medicine is practiced.

All this would be accompanied by higher taxes and, most likely, higher insurance premiums.

It is a plan that says the government knows best -- when it comes to a sixth of the US economy and some of the most important, personal and private decisions in people's lives. A few cosmetic concessions can't fix that basic premise.

Obama also made it clear yesterday that he wants Congress to use an obscure parliamentary gimmick known as "reconciliation" to bypass a Republican filibuster and force the bill through the Senate. Democrats will likely manage to get the 50 votes needed in the Senate to use this tactic -- but the vote will be far closer in the House, where deaths, defections and resignations have erased the three-vote margin of victory Democrats had last November.

The president was right about one thing yesterday. As he said, "Every argument has been made. Everything there is to say about health care has been said, and just about everyone has said it. So now is the time to make a decision."

Reportedly, as many as nine House Democrats who once voted against ObamaCare, including Rep. Scott Murphy of upstate New York, are now open to supporting the latest version. If they do, in the face of overwhelming public opposition, this new version of health reform could turn out to be Plan L -- for "loser."

*Michael Tanner is a Cato Institute senior fellow.*

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**JungleCogs**

03/04/2010 10:36 AM

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Remember, this isn't about health-care; it's all about money, power and control. Fight it at all costs. Hugh Hewitt has a list of who to call. Don't worry if they are not your representatives; just say you are ready to send out of state money to boot them out in Nov, if they vote for this scam.

**helloMurray**

03/04/2010 10:32 AM

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You can wrap it in ribbon and put a big bow on it it's still a bag of s\_\_t. It's like the lipstick on a pig comment he made.

**HealthcareFacists**

03/04/2010 10:32 AM

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Let's get these Healthcare Terrorists once and for all.

The Demoncrats will never quit - they are tone deaf, out of control, rampaging Plutocrats with an imaginary mandate to force us to buy in to their scammy corporate "healthcare" insurance or go to jail option.

President El-Chango did fulfill one promise: He said he would make Government transparent - and the Demoncrats are transparent insurance embezzlers and general all around

We live in a culture that pays people -- and pays them well --

00:00

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**FreedomWorks**

03/04/2010 8:54 AM

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I hope that narcissistic arrogant pond-scum keeps on smoking and drinking.

**txpoljldy**

03/04/2010 8:53 AM

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No cannot be shouted loud enough for these dems to try and pass this Heathcare bill. Agree with rjh...this is not the USA.we are adults and we are in charge of our healthcare, not the government, which already has way too much say in our medical care. It is insane to think you can insure more people and yet, it will cost less. We don't even have enough docs as it is, how they will be able to care for more for less money is illogical. This is like watch a demolition derby taking place in our medical industry. Congress could have actually fixed some of the problems with a one page bill, increase competition, decrease regulations, fix tort problems...but instead they put in a 2,000 page mumble jumble bill that has nothing to do with medicine but sure does affect our freedoms...txpoljldy

**samoht**

03/04/2010 8:11 AM

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I agree with mrfree and EricAuthurBlair and rjh.

**humbucker**

03/04/2010 8:04 AM

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Check out hughhewitt's blog. There is a list of Congress reps and "reverse the vote" target lists -those who voted yes but might switch to no. Obama made it clear he wanted to hear from the people, so give them a call a tell them how you feel.....

**mrfree**

03/04/2010 7:22 AM

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Medicare Fraud & Abuse agents have been trying to fight the fight for years. They do enjoy some degree of success, but there are too few agents to watch over an entire system that can be a pit of greed. I will say that the majority of providers are all honest and doing a great job, but there is that element.... And of course, there is that not my doc or provider mentality, which is why a lot of the problems aren't reported. I believe that when Medicare changed the way they transmit their EOB's to benny's, that may have actually created the potential for more abuse. It is harder to see all the charges on the forms, much easier to overlook. Changes in the health care and insurance industry is needed. But, I wouldn't bet on it. Too many cozy relationships with our legislators. Medicare is a huge drain on our economy, let's tighten it up, not expand it. That proverbial buck has to stop somewhere.

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