

Passing the healthcare smell test

Written by Joseph C. Phillips
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The narrative currently being written by the new left posits that opposition to their attempts to reform health care is fueled by political impotence, crackpot extremism and racism. Alas, elected officials demonstrating contempt for the people they represent has sadly become the rule rather than the exception. Calling the American people Nazis and fools may make a more compelling story than the truth, but it will not alter the fact that Americans simply do not want the expensive, top-heavy government healthcare boondoggle currently being stuffed down their throats.

The new left is always convinced they are the smartest folks in the room. We hear some version of their arrogance all the time: they know better how manage our retirement dollars; they know better how to manage private industry, they know better how to deliver health care. The American people may be many things, but contrary to the tale being spun by the new left, they are not a bunch of dull-witted penny stinkers. Even when our math is poor our noses can smell a pile of political doggy doo a mile away.

The president continues to promise that this reform – the substance of which members of congress won't read because they can't understand it without lawyers sitting nearby – will expand coverage to 47 million people, cut prices (not costs) and improve quality without adding to the budget deficit. Politicians have a nasty habit of promising champagne and caviar and delivering cheap wine and fish bait.

The Congressional Budget Office has concluded that the Obama plan would not reduce the burden on the federal treasury. CBO Director Doug Elmendorf testified to the contrary: "In the legislation that has been reported we don't see the sort of fundamental changes that would be necessary to reduce the trajectory of federal spending by a significant amount. And on the contrary, the legislation significantly expands the federal responsibility for health costs. ... [The government public option for health insurance] raises the amount of [spending] that is growing at this unsustainable rate."

Said responsibility will cost the federal government \$1.5 trillion over the next 10 years adding \$65 billion per year to the deficit even with all the new taxes democrats are proposing. This of course begs the question: If in truth the Obama plan will reduce costs why must we raise taxes to pay for it?

Americans understand that under the government plan costs will go up not down and the only way government can control costs is through rationing services.

The house bill creates a new "Center for Comparative Effectiveness Research" to gather data and to determine which treatments are the most cost- and/or clinically effective in handling particular medical cases. A panel of "experts" chosen by politicians to decide what is the best and most cost effective, one size fits all treatment does not sound like better quality medical care – not to most Americans and not to the British that are suffering under the auspices of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. This is the British government bureaucracy that decides which drugs will be available for their National Health Service.

Cost effectiveness is the job of NICE and indeed the institute has a habit of denying drugs based on their cost while ignoring their effectiveness. Most recently the institute denied four

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new drugs to cancer patients because they are too expensive. Those drugs by the way are available to American cancer patients under our pitiful system. No doubt this is one reason cancer survivor rates in America are the highest in the world while the Brits flirt with the lowest in Europe.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the arrogance of the new left than a statement the President made during a televised (yet again!) New Hampshire town hall meeting on healthcare. Tap-dancing like Sammy Davis Jr. the President said, "If you think about it UPS and FedEx are doing just fine...It's the Post office that's always having problems." 50 million Americans all shouted to their televisions all at once, "Exactly Mr. President!" There is absolutely zero reason to believe that the same problems afflicting the government run post office will not be present in a government run healthcare system.

Democrats disparaging voters and telling those that disagree with them to sit down and shut up may demonstrate some political savvy of which I am unaware. Ultimately, however, it will never make up for the fact that they have offered a plan for healthcare reform that simply doesn't pass the smell test.

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