

New website, conference, Capitol Hill briefings

Cato Scholars Take on Obama's Health Care Program

With the debate over health care reform heating up in Washington and around the country, the Cato Institute has taken the lead in providing principled free-market critiques and solutions. To bring its unique perspective to a wider audience, Cato launched a new website (healthcare.cato.org) to provide in-depth analysis of health care issues. The site is a perfect resource for everyone interested in becoming better informed on this crucial area of public policy.

Cato has also published two recent and important books on the health care. In *Healthy Competition: What's Holding Back Health Care and How to Free It*, Michael F. Cannon, director of health policy studies, and Michael Tanner, director of health and welfare studies, examine the best and worst ideas on health care reform from the left and the right—and provide their own, market-based solutions. And in *Crisis of Abundance: Rethinking How We Pay for Health Care*, adjunct scholar Arnold Kling argues against our current methods of financing health care, while advocating a return to individual responsibility.



Director of health policy studies Michael F. Cannon speaks on Capitol Hill as part of Cato's Health Care University. Cannon taught members of Congress, their staff, and the media about the benefits of a free market health care system and the perils of increased government control.

Michael Cannon took the fight against big government in health care to Congress when, over the course of four days in April, he delivered four lectures on Capitol Hill as part of “Health Care University: Which Reforms Are Better—or Worse—than Doing Nothing?” There he laid out three “lines in the sand” regarding health care policy—no public plan, no mandates, and no price controls—as well as free-market solutions. Cannon continued to promote these principles in his debut as a

A screenshot of the Cato Institute's new website, healthcare.cato.org. The page features a navigation bar with links for Cato Home, Contact, Support Cato, and Speakers. The main header reads "CATO On Health Care Reform" with the tagline "Reform, yes... but the right reform." Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Government Plans, State Health Care Reform, Medicare/ Medicaid, Free Market Solutions, and Blog. The main content area displays a large article titled "Seven Bad Ideas for Health Care Reform" with a sub-headline: "Seven likely components of an Obama health care plan that, taken collectively, would dramatically transform the American health care system in a way that would harm taxpayers, health care providers, and — most importantly — the quality and range of care given to patients." To the right of the article is a text box stating: "We are now facing some of the most sweeping changes health care has seen in decades. Reform is needed, but increasing government control over one-sixth of the economy and over important personal and private decisions — as many of the proposals aim to do — would harm American taxpayers, health care providers, and patients. The resources provided on this Web site provide in-depth analyses of health care issues and reform initiatives, and underscore the ways in which free-market reforms, increased consumer choice, and energized competition — not more government control — improve the quality and cost-efficiency of health care." At the bottom of the article are four small thumbnail images with titles: "Seven Bad Ideas for Health Care Reform", "Cato Institute Conference on Health Care Reform", "What is Barack Obama's Plan for Health Care Reform?", and "The Lessons of the Massachusetts Model".

The Cato Institute's new website (healthcare.cato.org) brings together the best analysis of health care policy from a market-liberal perspective. By making this information easily available in a single resource, Cato provides a powerful means to learn about this important area of public policy.

columnist for *Kaiser Health News*, where, in May, he published a column, “Is Universal Coverage Comparatively Effective?” Cannon called on Congress to “start practicing evidence-based health policy.” That same month, Cannon took Cato’s message to the pages of *National Review*, as part of a special health care issue.

Cato has stood firm in its opposition to government-mandated health coverage, even as many others embrace Mitt Romney’s “Massachusetts model.” In June, Michael Tanner published “Massachusetts Miracle or Massachusetts Miserable: What the Failure of the ‘Massachusetts Model’ Tells Us about Health Care Reform.” Tanner demonstrates the need to maintain free market principles in health care by exposing the awful outcome of what is now seen as the model for federal policy. He also addressed the potential federal plan directly with his latest Policy Analysis, “Obamacare to Come: Seven Bad Ideas for Health Care Reform.”

But more than just showing what’s wrong with our current health care system and the plans the Obama administration

has for changing it, Cato analysts are offering a comprehensive set of solutions for America’s health. Cato continues, for instance, to be a leading proponent of health savings accounts as an alternative or supplement to traditional health insurance.

On June 17, the Cato Institute took the opportunity to present both its critique of current and proposed interventionist health care and its vision for a better, free market future by hosting the Cato Institute Conference on Health Care Reform. This full day event featured a wide array of policy experts including U.S. Rep Paul Ryan (R-WI), Douglas Holtz-Eakin, former director of the Congressional Budget Office, and Susan Dentzer, editor-in-chief of *Health Affairs*, and Rick Scott, founder of Conservatives for Patients’ Rights. Panels discussed health insurance mandates, health delivery-system reform, ideas for a new public plan, and free market alternatives for providing health care.

By providing a clear and coherent voice in opposition to the bad policies being proposed in Washington, as well as principled solutions, Cato is leading the way to better health.