

# NEW YORK POST

## Health-care plan is \$uicide for New York

By Michael Goodwin

October 7, 2009

Like lemmings racing to the cliff, New York Democrats and Mayor Bloomberg, who got elected as a Republican in name only, are following [President Obama](#)'s push for a health-care overhaul. Here's a modest suggestion: First find out if the massive changes would be good or bad for New York.

Take those \$500 billion worth of planned cuts to Medicare. What would they do to city hospitals? Would New York's elderly suffer from reduced services? Does anybody know?

Then there's the plan to push many uninsured onto Medicaid. Not to put too fine a point on it, but Medicaid already is threatening to bankrupt the city and the state. I'd love to hear someone explain how adding to those costs amounts to "reform."

Gov. Paterson has his doubts. An analysis from his office warns the plan making its way through the [Senate](#) could cost the state nearly \$1 billion a year.

New York, no surprise, offers the richest and widest Medicaid coverage. And taxpayers have the outrageous bills to prove it.

A 2006 study by the Citizens Budget Commission found 4.4 million New Yorkers getting Medicaid benefits, nearly 25 percent of the state's population.

"New York has the highest Medicaid spending among the 50 states, accounting for 15 percent of the national total, although it covers only 8 percent of beneficiaries," the study found.

The cost per recipient, at nearly \$8,000 a year, was 75 percent above the national average.

This gusher of spending, a mix of federal, city and state funds, amounted to \$45 billion then. It goes up about 9 percent a year and is still climbing.

A look at the city's books is instructive. With nearly 2 million people on Medicaid, Big Apple taxpayers shell out nearly \$6 billion a year.

The federal stimulus package provides some relief for three years, to the tune of \$1.6 billion, but then the march to doom resumes. Absent real changes, disaster will come even sooner if more people are added to the rolls.