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Dr. Hillary Will See You Now

John C. Goodman

Think about every bad health-care idea that has been proposed over the last couple of decades: individual health-insurance mandates, employer health-insurance mandates, expansion of Medicaid, expansion of S-CHIP, creating Medicare for non-seniors, allowing outsiders access to the federal employees' health system, creating new tax subsidies, imposing limits on old tax subsidies, forcing insurers to take all applicants, no matter how sick, etc. Now imagine all of these ideas wrapped into one proposal.

That's Hillary's latest health care effort in a nutshell.

In one fell swoop she has cut the Gordian knot of health-care reform. The problem, especially for a Democratic presidential candidate, is: No matter what you propose, a significant number of the party faithful are not going to like it. The obvious solution: Propose everything!

Further, there is all pleasure and no pain in this grab bag of proposals. No one has to make any difficult choices between health care and other uses of

money. There is no rationing. No managed care. Everyone will have access to all that medical science has to offer. How should we respond to all of this? The right response to Hillary is to reject her love affair with bureaucratic institutions and focus instead on the value of empowering patients and doctors and creating a real market for medical care.

— John C. Goodman is president of the National Center for Policy Analysis.