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The elderly were the first group to turn against President Obama's health-care proposals, alienated by the plans to cut \$500 billion cut from Medicare. The young and the uninsured may be the next to jump ship — out of worry over about the huge premiums they'd have to pay.

Requiring everyone to buy insurance will impose a massive tax on all who now are uninsured. The Congressional Budget Office projects that it would force the middle-income uninsured to pay on average more than 15 percent of their income.

The poor will still have Medicaid. But for those earning more, the required premiums will be worse than any tax increase. For example, CBO estimates that when the program is fully implemented — by 2016 — an individual earning \$32,400 a year would have to pay \$4,100 in premiums before getting any subsidy. With deductibles and co-payments, he'd have to shell out \$5,600 a year, or 17.3 percent of his income. A family of four, making \$80,000 a year, would have to pay about \$10,500 in premiums alone — with deductibles and co-payments, up to \$15,000 or just under 20 percent of income.

And if they don't buy insurance, they'll face federal fines that begin to approach these same premium levels. They won't be able to buy what they truly need — catastrophic-only coverage at a lower premium — that won't satisfy ObamaCare's "minimum insurance" mandate.

The young and uninsured will catch on: This bill is designed to force healthy people who don't have health insurance — and may neither need nor want it — to buy it anyway, in order to raise the money to subsidize those who do need it.

Obama has pledged only to increase taxes on the rich. But his program essentially taxes the core of the middle class (those making \$30,000 to \$80,000). It will make them overpay in order to pick up the slack for others who need the extra coverage.

In other words, health-care "reform" is a health-care tax dressed up as a program to cover the uninsured.

No matter how Democrats get the money to cover those who need insurance, they offend supporters that they need to pass the bill:

* If they get the money from more Medicare cuts, they alienate the elderly still further.

* If they get it from raising the deficit, they lose moderates.

* If they hike taxes to do it, they lose the “Blue Dog” Democrats who’ve gone on record as opposing such increases.

* If they don’t increase the subsidies, they lose the uninsured themselves.

The latest data from Scott Rasmussen’s poll of those who lack health insurance indicates that they’re starting to turn skeptical about the Obama plan. It’s supposed to help them, yet they back it by only 58 percent to 35 percent — and only 30 percent support it strongly.

More to the point, only 35 percent feel it will improve the quality of their health care — and, by 41-26, they feel the cost of their care will go up, not down, under the plan.

Having the uninsured — the stated object of Obama’s compassion — turn against his reform would be the most lethal cut of all.