

# A DECENT HEALTH CARE REFORM PLAN-FROM MAX BAUCUS



Graphic by twolf

Tell me how this sounds for a health care reform plan.

- A national health care exchange
- Buy-in to Medicare at age 55
- No discrimination against those with pre-existing conditions
- No waiting period for Medicare for disabled
- CHIP covers up to 250% of poverty level
- Credits for small businesses and individuals to make health care affordable

Oh, and don't forget this bit:

- A public option

Now, it may surprise you to learn this. But the architect of this program is none other than Max Baucus—the guy who has been pushing against a public option since the insurers were allowed to drive this debate. Here's the language from his white paper—dated November 12, 2008—on the public option:

The Exchange would also include a new public plan option, similar to Medicare. This option would abide by the same rules as private insurance plans participating in the Exchange (e.g., offer the same levels of benefits and

set the premiums the same way). Rates paid to health care providers by this option would be determined by balancing the goals of increasing competition and ensuring access for patients to high-quality health care

It's worth reading the whole thing. It's like a journey through the looking glass, to a time when even a conservative Democrat would openly espouse doing what's right to truly improve health care. It's a voyage to a time before the corporations started running this process. And it's proof that Max Baucus doesn't believe the option (or lack thereof) that he is currently pitching is the best for this country.