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Top Obama Adviser: Congress Will Approve Government-Owned Health-Care This Summer

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By Terence P. Jeffrey, Editor-in-Chief

(CNSNews.com) - Senior White House Adviser David Axelrod said on CBS's "Face the Nation" yesterday that President Obama intends to promote a health-care reform plan that will include creating a government-owned health-care company and predicted that Congress will enact such a plan by the end of the summer.

Axelrod said that a government-owned health-care company would "give consumers a better deal."

Last week, Obama sent a letter to Senators Edward Kennedy (D.-Mass.) and Max Baucus (D.-Mont.), who are pushing efforts in the Senate for a national health-care plan. In the letter, Obama said he favored, as part of this plan, creating a government-owned health-care company.

"I strongly believe that Americans should have the choice of a public health insurance option operating alongside private plans," Obama said in the letter to the two senators. "This will give them a better range of choices, make the health care market more competitive, and keep insurance companies honest."

Questioned by guest host Harry Smith on CBS's "Face the Nation," senior Obama adviser David Axelrod reiterated Obama's call for a government-run health-care company to compete with private health insurance and said that a law creating such a program could be enacted this summer.

"In order to make this work, will the federal government have to go into the insurance business?" Smith asked Axelrod.

"Well, I think that the president and many others believe that the availability of a public option, alongside private options, for people who need health care is a positive thing," said Axelrod. "It'll create the kind of additional competition that will help lower prices and give consumers a better deal. So, I think that he is going to promote that part of his plan. These discussions are ongoing."

Later in the interview, Smith asked Axelrod whether the administration believed it could enact its health-care plan before the end of the summer.

"Do you think this will get done this summer?" asked Smith.

"I really do," said Axelrod. "I think there's a sense of urgency about health care reform. As I said, every family knows--they've seen their premiums double in the last, in the last decade; they've seen their deductibles grow; they're paying more for less. And businesses are feeling it, particularly small businesses, but all businesses; and we see it in the government, in these climbing deficits. So, I think that there is a consensus that something has to be done."

"And I think, unlike 1993, Harry, when there was a solid opposition in the business community, in the insurance community, and so on, you don't see that now," said Axelrod. "You see coalitions, a broad recognition for change. So, I do think it'll happen this summer."

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