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## Michigan's Medicaid Maelstrom

By **STEPHEN MOORE**

Opposition to ObamaCare has intensified, according to a new Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll. Moreover, “the 12-point gap between supporters and skeptics is the largest since a survey taken in March 2010, the month the health law was passed,” reports the Journal. Maybe someone should tell Michigan Republicans about this development.

The Wolverine State is one of several still sitting on the fence when it comes to the ObamaCare expansion of Medicaid. Michael Reitz of the [Mackinac Center](#), a conservative think tank, tells us that he is increasingly worried that “Republicans may be on the brink of caving on Medicaid.” If so, this would be a big win for President Obama and his embattled health-care plan.

Right now the Michigan GOP, which controls the governorship and both legislative chambers in Lansing, is split on the issue. Gov. Rick Snyder favors the expansion, and several key Republicans in the Legislature who want the free money (for now) from Washington are also on board. But rank-and-file Republicans are mostly opposed, and this has created a stalemate.

Republican leaders are trying to hammer out a compromise that everyone in the party can live with and that doesn't bow to White House demands. “If we take this money it's not going to be on their terms, it will be on our terms,” Senate Majority Leader Randy Richardville told the Detroit News recently.

An idea gaining traction is to accept the Medicaid dollars but place a four-year lifetime cap on eligibility for able-bodied adults. After four years on the program, Michigan residents would be cut off from any further benefits. Another Republican reform would allow health savings accounts for Medicaid patients as a way to save money.



*Reuters*

### HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius

Some Republicans are also demanding a “cancellation” policy that would allow the state to take the money now but opt out of the Medicaid expansion later if costs escalate out of control. Until 2017, the federal government covers 100 percent of the costs.

Mr. Snyder has reportedly invited Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to come to Michigan and listen to the Republicans' offer. But Democrats in Washington and in Lansing are complaining that these conditions are non-starters and that Republicans are really trying to kill the Medicaid expansion and blame it on the White House.

The feds have turned down almost all Medicaid waivers from Republican governors over the past four years, so we don't expect HHS to accept the conditions. Still, GOP leaders in Lansing say that the administration is so anxious to get Michigan to enroll in the program that it may be open to the waivers. Perhaps. But the bigger worry is that Mr. Snyder and Republican leaders end up passing Medicaid expansion with mostly Democratic votes.