

House Health Plan Requires Insurance Coverage

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WASHINGTON_House Democrats want to require individuals and employers to get health insurance _ or pay a penalty.

For individuals, the penalty would be 2.5 percent of income _ but it could go no higher than the average cost of health insurance.

The penalty for employers would be much higher _ 8 percent of a worker's wages _ with an exemption for small businesses. Business groups are strongly opposing an employer requirement.

The House plan, released Tuesday, lacked total cost figures. House leaders want to quickly move the legislation through three committees and to a floor vote before the congressional recess in August. President Barack Obama is pressing the House and Senate to vote this summer on the bill.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

WASHINGTON (AP) _ House Democrats want to raise taxes by 5.4 percent on millionaires to pay for covering the uninsured.

The ambitious plan would also require employers and individuals to get health insurance coverage or pay a penalty. It would scale back Medicare and Medicaid payments to hospitals and doctors.

But the liberal-leaning plan lacked total cost figures and it was unclear whether last-minute changes by its sponsors would satisfy moderate and conservative Democrats who last week refused to commit their support.

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