

# A price tag on 'Medicare for all'

## Study projects 10-year cost at \$32.6 trillion

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. Bernie Sanders' "Medicare for all" plan would increase government health care spending by \$32.6 trillion over 10 years, according to a study by a university-based libertarian policy center.

That's trillion with a "T."

The latest plan from the Vermont independent would require historic tax increases as government replaces what employers and consumers now pay for health care, according to the analysis being released Monday by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University in Virginia. It would deliver significant savings on administration and drug costs, but increased demand for care would drive up spending, the analysis found.

Sanders' plan builds on Medicare, the popular insurance program for seniors. All U.S. resi-

dents would be covered with no copays and deductibles for medical services. The insurance industry would be relegated to a minor role.

"Enacting something like 'Medicare for all' would be a transformative change in the size of the federal government," said Charles Blahous, the study's author. Blahous was a senior economic adviser to former President George W. Bush and a public trustee of Social Security and Medicare during the Obama administration.

Responding to the study, Sanders took aim at the Merca-

tus Center, which receives funding from the conservative Koch brothers. Koch Industries CEO Charles Koch is on the center's board.

"If every major country on earth can guarantee health care to all, and achieve better health outcomes, while spending substantially less per capita than we do, it is absurd for anyone to suggest that the United States cannot do the same," Sanders said in a statement. "This grossly misleading and biased report is the Koch brothers' response to the growing support in our country for a

'Medicare for all' program."

Sanders' office has not done a cost analysis, a spokesman said. However, the Mercatus estimates are within the range of other cost projections for Sanders' 2016 plan.

Sanders' staff found an error in an initial version of the Mercatus report, which counted a long-term care program that was in the 2016 proposal but not the current one. Blahous corrected it, reducing his estimate by about \$3 trillion over 10 years. Blahous says the report is his own work, not the Koch brothers'.



Two lawsuits, including one seeking \$100 million, were filed against Ride the Ducks' owners and operators.

## Lawsuits filed in sinking

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The owners and operators of a tourist boat that sank this month in Missouri, killing 17 people, put profits over people's safety when they decided to put the Ride the Ducks boat on a lake despite design problems and warnings of severe weather, a lawsuit alleges.

The lawsuit filed Sunday in U.S. District Court in Kansas City seeks \$100 million in damages on behalf of two of nine members of an Indiana family who died when the tourist boat sank July 19 at Table Rock Lake near Branson. A second lawsuit was filed Monday in state court on behalf of three daughters of William and Michelle Bright, of Higginsville, Missouri, who died in the accident. The wrongful-death lawsuit seeks more than \$125,000 in damages.

"This tragedy was the predictable and predicted result of decades of unacceptable, greed-driven, and willful ignorance of safety by the Duck Boat industry in the face of specific and repeated warnings that their Duck Boats are death traps for passengers and pose grave danger to the public on water and on land," the federal lawsuit, filed on behalf of the estates of 76-year-old Ervin Coleman and 2-year-old Maxwell Ly, states.

Robert Mongeluzzi, whose law firm won a \$17 million settlement when two Hungarian students drowned on a duck boat in Philadelphia in 2010, said at a news conference Monday that the Coleman family wants to know what happened when the boat sank.

"And more importantly they want to make sure that no one ever dies again inside a death

trap duck boat," Mongeluzzi said. "They've asked that this lawsuit leads the charge to ban duck boats so they no longer kill their passengers and the children who ride them."

Ripley Entertainment Inc., Ride the Ducks International, Ride the Ducks of Branson, the Herschend Family Entertainment Corp. and Amphibious Vehicle Manufacturing are named in the federal suit. The state-court suit names Ripley Entertainment and Ride the Ducks International, as well as boat operators Kenneth McKee and Robert Williams.

A Ripley spokeswoman said in a statement Monday that the company remains "deeply saddened" by the accident. She said the company would not comment further because a National Transportation Safety Board investigation is still underway.

## Manafort's trial to shed light on Mueller probe

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The trial of President Donald Trump's onetime campaign chairman will open this week with tales of lavish spending, secret shell companies and millions of dollars of Ukrainian money flowing through offshore bank accounts and into the political consultant's pocket.

What's likely to be missing: answers about whether the Trump campaign coordinated with the Kremlin during the 2016 presidential election, or really any mention of Russia at all.

Paul Manafort's financial crimes trial, the first arising from special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation, will center on his Ukrainian consulting work and only briefly touch on his involvement with the president's campaign.

But the broader implications are unmistakable.

The trial, scheduled to begin Tuesday with jury selection in Alexandria, Virginia, will give the public its most detailed glimpse of evidence Mueller's team has spent the year accumulating. It will feature testimony about the business dealings and foreign ties of a defendant Trump entrusted to run his campaign during a critical stretch in 2016, including during the Republican convention. And it will unfold at



Paul Manafort

a delicate time for the president as Mueller's team presses for an interview and as Trump escalates his attacks on an investigation he calls a "witch hunt."

Adding to the intrigue is the expected spectacle of Manafort's deputy, Rick Gates, testifying against him after cutting a plea deal with prosecutors, and the speculation that Manafort, who faces charges in two different courts and decades in prison if convicted, may be holding out for a pardon from Trump.

"Perhaps he believes that he's done nothing wrong, and because he's done nothing wrong, he's unwilling to plead guilty to any crime whatsoever — even if it's a lesser crime," said Jimmy Gurule, a Notre Dame law professor and former federal prosecutor. "Obviously, that's very risky for him."