

Bachmann's \$105 billion charge: Was the funding secret?

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On the March 6, 2011, edition of "Meet the Press", Rep. Michele Bachmann said the Democratic-backed health care bill spent \$105 billion "secretly." We check whether she's right.

Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., used a March 6, 2011, appearance on NBC's *Meet the Press* to attack the health care law for what she said was secret spending.

"It is shocking the revelations of all the money that's been spent," said Bachmann, R-Minn. "There is a Congressional Research Service report that just was issued in February, and we discovered that secretly, unbeknownst to members of Congress, over \$105 billion was hidden in the Obamacare legislation to fund the implementation of Obamacare. This is something that wasn't known."

Readers deluged us with requests to fact-check the statement, so we did.

We added up the spending Bachmann was referring to and got \$104 billion -- very close to her number. Where our analysis diverges is her claim that the spending was "secret."

We concluded that Bachmann has a point if you look at at the amount of media coverage the appropriations and transfers inspired. There was hardly any. However, she went further than that, charging that the provisions were passed "secretly, unbeknownst to members of Congress." And that was not accurate.

The spending provisions were in the plain language of the bill; they did not vary dramatically from past congressional practice; and the bill was made public for 72 hours before the vote. On balance, we rated Bachmann's statement Barely True.