

Medicare Maladies

A Series that Exposes the Dangerous Elements of the Medicare Bill currently in Committee

MM #34: The “Popular” Drug Proposal Nobody Likes

Presumably, lawmakers recently created proposals that would offer prescription drugs to all Medicare patients because legislators thought they would be popular. After all, the first wave of nearly 77 million baby boomers is set retire at the end of the decade

How wrong they are: *The Washington Times* reports that a coalition of more than 20 conservative and fiscal groups are urging lawmakers to scrap their proposals, saying they are fiscally irresponsible and harmful to seniors—the folks lawmakers say they’re trying to help.

“The prescription drug entitlement is an ill-considered proposal that ought to carry an interaction warning for seniors and taxpayers,” John Berthoud, president of the National Taxpayers Union Foundation told the *Times* Aug. 27.

Amen, says Heritage Foundation health-care expert Robert Moffit. The House and Senate bills would encourage employers to drop or scale back drug coverage for their retirees and force them into Medicare, a government-run program. “That will result in millions of seniors losing their existing private coverage,” Moffit says.

One way to fix this problem, Moffit says, is simply to provide drug coverage to seniors who need it. Studies show more than three-quarters of seniors already have drug coverage. “There is no evidence...that there’s any need for a universal drug benefit,” Moffit says.

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(“Medicare Maladies” is a regular feature, launched 7/14/03, from The Heritage Foundation. Sad to say, there’s another malady coming your way tomorrow. Daily “maladies” are also available on heritage.org.)