

# Medicare Maladies

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

## MM #5: Senate Keeps Best Health Plan for Itself

If the Senate has its way on Medicare “reform,” FEHBP won’t be for you and me.

What’s FEHBP? It’s shorthand for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program—a health-care plan that serves 8.3 million federal employees (including members of Congress), retirees and their families.

It’s also a “crucial” element in true Medicare reform, according to an online memo from Stuart Butler, The Heritage Foundation’s chief domestic policy expert.

Under FEHBP, people can choose from among a dozen to two dozen competing health plans every year—all of which have drug coverage integrated into their health plans. People under the program are then free to switch plans each year if their chosen plan doesn’t fit their needs. This choice feature is something that Butler praises in his memo: “Seniors, not government officials, should decide what constitutes a good plan.”

The House Medicare bill calls for something like FEHBP to exist in Medicare in 2010. The Senate version? Forget it. It has nothing that even comes close to FEHBP.

That means if the House provision isn’t written into a new bill currently in conference, members of Congress and other federal employees will continue to have a great health plan that you pay for, but will never be able to have yourself. Remember, this is what Congress calls Medicare “reform.”

Read more of Butler’s memo: [www.heritage.org/Research/HealthCare/wm311.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/HealthCare/wm311.cfm)

For more information or to receive an e-mail version of “Medicare Maladies,” contact [medicaremaldies@heritage.org](mailto:medicaremaldies@heritage.org) or call Heritage Media Services at (202) 675-1761.

(“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](http://heritage.org).)