

Medicare Maladies

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

MM #53: Doing The Right Thing For Medicare

President Bush wants to do the right thing.

That's what he said when asked about how proposals to add prescription drugs to Medicare as an entitlement will affect the federal budget deficit.

"I think it's the right thing to do," Bush said during a Sept. 25 meeting with lawmakers working on the Medicare legislation. "We have an obligation to our seniors."

Of course we do, Mr. President. But the country also has obligation to our youth—the ones who will be paying for these proposals should you sign them into law.

Right now, the drug proposals could cost as much as \$432 billion in 10 years. The Heritage Foundation figures it could be as much as \$2 trillion by 2030. That means today's 40-year-olds will pay an extra \$16,127 in taxes before they retire—and pass the burden to today's twenty- and thirtysomethings.

"There's a better way, Mr. President," Heritage health-care expert Robert Moffit says. "Forget the universal entitlement. Target subsidies to poor seniors who need the help, and start the transition to a system that looks like the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, which covers federal workers and retirees. It offers solid health plans that offer prescription drugs."

Heritage and the House consider FEHBP to be the best model for the baby boomers, who will retire in just eight years. You can read more about it at heritage.org.

For more information or to receive an e-mail version of "Medicare Maladies," contact medicaremaladies@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.)