

# Medicare Maladies

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

## MM #64: How Many Retirees Would Lose In Your State?

More than 4 million retirees nationwide would lose their employer-based prescription-drug coverage if Medicare proposals on Capitol Hill become law.

But where do they live?

Kenneth Thorpe, a health-care expert at Emory University and former adviser to President Clinton, tries to answer that important question in a study.

He finds that the number of losers varies widely by state, from 385,000 in California to 5,000 in Alaska or Wyoming. States with traditionally high numbers of seniors are hit pretty hard, too. Thorpe finds that 252,000 retirees in Florida would lose their private coverage and be dumped into an inferior government-run drug plan. So would 70,000 in Arizona.

But Thorpe says his study, which he presented at an Oct. 7 Heritage Foundation forum, shows one consistent finding: "...unlike other Medicare covered benefits, the proposals include rules concerning retiree health benefits that are likely to accelerate the trend toward employers and other plan sponsors dropping retiree benefits."

That's something lawmakers should keep in mind as they try to wrap up work this week on a compromise Medicare proposal to send to President Bush. They've been working on the proposals all summer and a good chunk of the fall, too. They better get it right.

Find out how many retirees in your state could lose private drug coverage at [heritage.org](http://heritage.org).

For more information or to receive an e-mail version of "Medicare Maladies," contact [medicaremaladies@heritage.org](mailto: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](http://heritage.org).)