

Medicare Maladies

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

MM #72: What Are Lawmakers Trying To Do Here Again?

Is Congress trying to *expand* Medicare—or reform it?

Lawmakers themselves seem unsure, *The Washington Post* noted in an Oct. 26 editorial that outlines the differences between House Republicans and Senate Democrats over the direction of current Medicare legislation.

“These differences are not minor, narrow or easily resolved,” the newspaper said. “They represent fundamentally different understandings of what this bill is supposed to be about—whether it is merely an expansion of Medicare to include prescription drugs or a much deeper reform of Medicare aimed, among other things, at making the program cost less over time.”

The Post added that it doesn’t support a Medicare bill that neither halts the growth in the program’s cost nor reflects the changes in medicine since 1965, when Medicare began.

The Heritage Foundation agrees. We have provided study after study that shows how Medicare will become bankrupt in the not-too-distant future—especially after the 77 million-member baby boom generation starts retiring in 2011. We also have provided suggestions for lawmakers on how to offer prescription drugs to seniors without cleaning out the federal coffers (Hint: just target the seniors who need the help, not everyone).

Both Heritage and *The Post* know what the Medicare proposals, now being worked on by a Capitol Hill committee, should accomplish. Let’s hope lawmakers will know, too.

Read more Heritage Medicare research 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.)