

Medicare Maladies

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

MM #78: Left, Right And Center Agree This Is Bad

A former Clinton health-care adviser. The nation's "largest progressive activist organization." And America's most prominent conservative think tank.

They don't have much in common except this: They all believe that a proposed Medicare prescription-drug entitlement would be a bad idea because, if it becomes law, it would force about 4 million retirees to lose their private prescription-drug coverage.

The U.S. Action Education Fund, a Washington-based group that bills itself as "the nation's largest progressive activist organization," is the latest to reach this conclusion. Its October report, "Paying More For Less," concurs with separate conclusions from The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, and Kenneth Thorpe, a former Clinton health-care adviser who's now a health policy professor at Emory University in Atlanta.

But their unity ends when asked about how to fix the proposal, now working its way through Congress. Heritage suggests that lawmakers model Medicare after the 43-year-old Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, a health plan that offers prescription drug coverage to all federal employees and retirees, including members of Congress. U.S. Action's ideas, on the other hand, include spending more than the proposed \$400 billion budget limit on Medicare.

Heritage disagrees with this remedy. But when left, right and center do agree that the drug proposal is a problem, it should say something to lawmakers. Namely, start all over again.

Find out about better ways to offer prescription drugs through Medicare 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.)