

Medicare Maladies

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

MM #88: How fast can you read the Medicare drug bill?

Is there a speed-reader in the House? How about the Senate?

Lawmakers will need at least one if they want to know exactly what's in the Medicare prescription drug bill that they could vote on as early as Nov. 21.

The bill arrived just one day before and it's not light reading: It's 681 pages long, three inches thick and weighs nearly seven pounds. And the proposal's language isn't that of a novel or a high-school textbook. Page 149, for example, goes like this: "The gross per capita Medicaid expenditures for prescription drugs for 2003 under this subparagraph is equal to the expenditures, including dispensing fees, for the State under this title during 2003 for covered outpatient drugs, determined per full-benefit-dual-eligible-individual for such individuals not receiving medical assistance for such drugs through a Medicaid managed plan."

That's one of the more lyrical passages. Another section on Page 45 reads: "(II) Increase in federal percentage assumed in second risk corridor. And equal percentage point increase in the percents applied under subparagraphs (B)(ii)(II) and (C)(ii)(II) of section 1860D-15(e)(2)."

The Medicare prescription drug bill is one that will affect not only today's seniors, but baby boomers and members of Generations "X" and "Y." Lawmakers should know what their votes mean to their constituents, their country—or at least themselves.

Try reading the bill yourself (in one day) at:

<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/media/pdf/hr1/hr1-conflegtext.pdf>.

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.)