

November 5, 2009

THE NEW HOUSE BILL: WHAT'S HIDDEN IN THE 1,990 PAGES?

The consolidated House bill that Nancy Pelosi will bring to the floor for a vote (H.R. 3962) is 1,990 pages. Few Congressmen will read it, and the public will find the task even more daunting.

Here are some of the items slipped into the oversized bill. You won't find these disclosed by *The New York Times* or highlighted on CNN.

1) CAN YOU KEEP YOUR INSURANCE IF YOU LIKE IT? NO!

Sec. 202 (pp. 91-92 on this site) "Protecting the Choice to Keep Current Insurance" – This section does just the opposite. It says if you get your health plan through your job, your employer will have a "grace period" and then will have to enroll you in the plan the government wants you to have. If you buy your own insurance, you won't have a grace period. As soon as anything changes in your current contract – co-pay, deductible, term or benefit (the kinds of things often adjusted yearly) you will have to give up your current plan and enroll in the plan the "qualified plan" the government wants you to have.

2) HOW MUCH WILL YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR YOUR LEGALLY REQUIRED PLAN?

Sec. 224 (b) (p. 118 on this site) provides that eighteen months after the bill is passed, the Secretary of Health and Human Services will announce what the benefits package is and how much the benefits package will cost.

This is like if a banker handing you a loan agreement today, saying "sign here" and 18 months later filling in the interest rate and the repayment terms.

The Congressional Budget Office, however, issued a report to Congressman Charles Rangel on November 2, on what you will be legally required to pay for mandatory health insurance. If you're an individual earning \$44,000 before taxes, you will have to pay \$5,300 for the premium and estimated \$2000 in out of pocket costs for a total of \$7,300 a year. That's 17% of your pre-tax income.

If you're a family earning \$102,100 a year before taxes, you'll have to pay a \$15,000 premium plus an estimated \$5,300 out of pocket, totaling \$20,300 or 20% of your pre-tax income.

For the entire chart of what you will have to pay, go to cbo.gov .

3) COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH WILL BE USED TO DETERMINE WHAT DOCTORS SHOULD PROVIDE FOR THEIR PATIENTS UNDER MEDICARE AND OTHER GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS.

TITLE IV, Subtitle A, Sec. 1401 (p. 756 on this site): A comparative effectiveness research center is established, and one of its duties is to “assist the users of health information technology focused on clinical decision support to promote the timely incorporation of such findings into clinical practices...” The bill goes on to specify that the Center shall “ensure” that its findings are used for “more effective and efficient decisions regarding medical items and services.”

4) The President has stated that he intends to reduce future Medicare funding over the next decade by an estimated \$500 billion, though some 30% more people will be enrolling as the babyboomers turn 65. The numbers don’t add up. Yet despite these severe cuts in future funding, and the reduction in access to medical care that will result, the bill shifts priorities to fund these new services:

“REIMBURSEMENT FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES,” found in Sec. 222 (p. 617 on this site).

This new demonstration program will “notify Medicare beneficiaries of their right to receive language services in their primary language,” and ensure that there are no co-pays for language services. A special cultural sensitivity program is also established for providing health care on the U.S.-Mexican border area.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC PREFERENCES: You will find numerous examples in the bill. Here are a few:

“Sec. 2521: Comprehensive Programs to Provide Education to Nurses and Create a Pipeline to Nursing.

(g) PREFERENCE – In awarding grants under this section the Secretary shall give preference to programs that

(2) provide for improving the diversity of the new nurse graduates to reflect changes in the demographics of the patient population”

“Sec. 2533 Secondary School Health Sciences Training Program...

(d) PREFERENCE - In awarding grants and contracts under subsection (b), the Secretary shall give preference to entities that have a demonstrated record of at least one of the following:

(1) Graduating a high or significantly improved percentage of students who have exhibited mastery in secondary school State science standards.

(2) Graduating students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including racial and ethnic minorities ...”

“Sec. 399V Grants to Promote Positive Health Behaviors and Outcomes (p1422 on this site) (b) USE OF FUNDS – Grants awarded under subsection (a) shall be used to support community health workers

(1) to educate, guide, and provide outreach in a community setting regarding health problems prevalent in medically underserved communities, especially racial and ethnic minority populations”

**THESE PROGRAMS ARE A PIPELINE FOR MONEY TO BUY VOTES AND
POLITICAL INFLUENCE**

Hundreds of pages devoted to establishing funded programs for outreach into communities, with funding designated for entities that are vaguely defined except for having “documented community activity and experience with community health workers”. Sec. 399V cited above is an example. The purpose is to “educate, guide, and provide experiential learning opportunities that target behavioral risk factors including poor nutrition, smoking, and obesity. “Each community health worker program receiving funds under the grant will provide services in the cultural context most appropriate for the individual served by the program.”

These programs will “enhance the capacity of individuals to utilize health services and health-related social services under Federal, State, and local programs by assisting individuals in establishing eligibility under the programs and in receiving services or other benefits of the programs and
Providing other services ...that may include transportation and translation services.”

**GRANDMA HAS TO GIVE UP GETTING A NEW HIP OR KNEE BUT THERE IS
PLENTY OF MONEY FOR THIS!**