

About Those 'Millions' Losing Medicaid

Senate Republicans have to rework provisions in their big budget bill to pass muster with esoteric parliamentary rules, but tune out the Democratic wishcasting that the entire project is in jeopardy. On the other hand, here's some Capitol Hill news worth knowing: The GOP bill isn't throwing all and sundry off their health insurance, no matter the media claims to the contrary.

A Congressional Budget Office letter this week adds important explanatory details to the claim that 7.8 million more Americans won't have health insurance in 2034 because of GOP Medicaid changes. Democrats broadcast this CBO estimate to frighten voters that Republicans are locking vulnerable Americans out of hospitals. But here are the facts CBO offered to the GOP House Budget Committee.

Of that 7.8 million, some 4.8 million are uninsured because they don't comply with the bill's part-time work requirement. This is a torpedo in the hull for the Democratic talking point that everyone on Medicaid already works. The bill asks able-bodied, prime-age adults without children to work or volunteer roughly 20 hours a week. The serious academic evidence suggests perhaps half of that able-bodied population isn't clearing that basic work bar. *

A recent report from the American Enterprise Institute is sobering: "For Medicaid recipients who do not report working, the most common activity after sleeping is watching television and playing video games. They spend 4.2 hours per day watching television and playing video games, or 125 hours during a 30-day month." In a healthier political culture, even Democrats would agree that men who decline to work shouldn't get free health insurance to check out of life. The real "Call of Duty" is getting a job.

$$4.8 + 1.4 = 6.2 \text{ million}$$

Another 1.4 million of the uninsured, CBO says, "would be people who do not meet citizenship and immigration status requirements for Medicaid enrollment." Start a nationwide search for the median voter who wants free Medicaid for illegal migrants. The budget letter also says the 7.8 million figure includes 1.6 million who have access to other forms of subsidized coverage such as the ObamaCare exchanges.

One other nugget deserves more attention: CBO says even under the GOP bill the health program's spending will grow by more than \$200 billion over 10 years. Only in Washington's fun house does the bill somehow constitute a "cut" to Medicaid.

Democrats will continue to say that GOP changes to Medicaid amount to snatching healthcare from children, but the truth is closer to the inverse. Republicans are doing the country a fiscal and cultural

favor by shoring up the program for the poor and disabled. Remember these details tomorrow, or maybe even later today, when you see another media dispatch about GOP Medicaid cruelty.

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