

Doughnuts in the parking lot (12/15/09)

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Washington Post: Should the Senate have ditched the Medicare buy-in?

No, thank you. Even supporters are doing doughnuts in the parking lot trying to explain away the holes in this idea; the buy-in takes a really bad concept (the public option) and makes it worse. It sends sick people careening into one market and healthy people hurtling in the opposite direction, wreaking havoc with premiums on both sides. Those buying in would almost certainly require heavy subsidies, adding another open-ended burden on the federal budget. Not only would this do nothing to cut costs, it would actually expand and extend the biggest cost problem of all - Medicare's fee-for-service structure. It would enrage doctors, who already feel underpaid by Medicare. And it could well accelerate the collapse of the Medicare Trust Fund and, in doing so, put current and future Medicare recipients at risk. This one has "FAIL" stamped all over it in red ink.