

**Republican Perspective**  
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**by Ed Manning**

**MEDICARE FOR ALL?**

*“If you do not take an interest in the affairs of your government, then you are doomed to live under the rule of fools.” Plato, Greek Philosopher*

The Mercatus Center is the academic research arm of George Mason University. It published a report on Democrat Socialist Bernie Sanders' Medicare for All Act (M4A). Mercatus is not a favorite of the left.

The M4A report is sobering and shines a bright light on the cost of socialistic health care. Sanders' plan would increase the federal budget spending by \$32.6 trillion during its first ten years of full implementation (2022-2031).

Mercatus states that M4A will increase healthcare costs in several ways. First, providing health insurance coverage to all persons currently uninsured. This will likely increase the demand for health services. Second, the plan expands the range of services. Dental, vision, and hearing care are covered for all. Third, “no cost-sharing, including deductibles, coinsurance, copayments, or similar charges, be imposed on an individual” will increase healthcare utilization.

The Bill of Rights does not include healthcare. Yet the left continues its march toward single-payer under the guise it is a "right." M4A has 16 co-sponsors that include Cory Booker, Kamala Harris and Elizabeth Warren. Damn the torpedos, full steam ahead and don't worry about the cost to taxpayers or the quality of care.

M4A pays for its largesse by reducing federal payments to hospitals and private physicians servicing Medicare patients. Under current law, Medicare reimburses these providers at much lower rates than private insurance. M4A calls for payment of healthcare providers under current Medicare law. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services forecast that by 2019, over 80 percent of hospitals will lose money treating Medicare patients.

How many current physicians are willing to practice after taking a 25-30% pay cut? Medicare currently reimburses physicians < 25% of private insurance rates. This may be one reason why doctors limit the number of Medicare patients in their practice. Under M4A concierge medical practices may flourish. Bernie Sanders, Tom Steyer and other left elites will not wait in line for treatment. Do you believe they will go to a cardiologist or oncologist who is only getting paid 70-75% of his worth? Look for Democrats to exempt Congress from M4A.

What impact does an increase of \$32.6 trillion have to the federal health budget? Mercatus finds: “the federal cost of enacting the M4A Act would be such that doubling all federal individual and corporate income taxes going forward would be insufficient to fully finance the plan, even under the assumption that provider payment rates are reduced by over 40 percent for treatment of patients now covered by private insurance.” You may wish to read that finding again.

Don't be fooled by the calls for single-payer healthcare. Rationing care and higher taxes on the middle-class is the outcome. Bernie Sanders home state of Vermont, abandoned single payer. Why? Because it would have required an annual extra \$2.6 billion in taxes. A whopping 160% increase in state taxes. Colorado rejected it when it was revealed that in order to pay for it, taxes on just about everything would go up by 10%. Further, by year 10 there would be a \$7.8 billion deficit.

Hey Bernie, listen to your Vermont constituents! For the rest of us, heed Plato.