

Government Aides Send Seniors Mixed Messages

The healthcare reform debate is far from over and will only intensify because government staffers are sending mixed messages to seniors about the Medicare Advantage program, Karl Rove says.

The government is scrambling to repair his message for fear it will upset seniors who depend on it, Rove wrote in his weekly op-ed published Wednesday in The Wall Street Journal.

If Obama targets Medicare Advantage, which allows seniors to use Medicare funds to buy private insurance plans that fit their needs and budgets, they would stand to lose “nearly 20% and thus reduce the amount of money each will have to buy insurance,” Rove contends.

The political cost for Democrats is that seniors vote in greater numbers than any other demographic, which could tip most competitive House and Senate races.

White House senior adviser David Axelrod has been misleading the public when it comes to paying for healthcare reform, especially retirees.

The mixed messages Rove referred to include:

- **June 23:** Obama said, "If you like your healthcare plan, you can keep your healthcare plan" and you won't have to change it under the proposed reform."
- **Aug. 14:** Axelrod sent a viral e-mail rebutting the idea that Medicare benefits would be cut to finance reform.
- **Aug. 15:** Obama stated during a town hall in Montana that healthcare reform would be funded by eliminating “about \$177 billion over 10 years" for "what's called Medicare Advantage."
- **Aug. 16:** Obama said during a town hall in Colorado that he would cover two-thirds of the "roughly \$900 billion" cost of his healthcare reform plan by eliminating waste, again citing Medicare Advantage.

Axelrod also has said that the administration would cut \$622 billion from Medicare and Medicaid, “with a big chunk coming from Medicare Advantage.”

In a June 13 radio address, Obama heralded these cuts as a “common-sense” approach to finding a way to pay for overhauling healthcare.

Rove contends that the **government leadership dislikes the Medicare Advantage program because it puts senior patients in charge of healthcare decisions, not the government.**