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WHAT $80 MILLION FOR MEDICARE ADS COULD BE USED FOR

According to news reports, the Bush Administration is now on track to spend $80 million of taxpayer money this year for partisan advertisements, inaccurate fliers and counterfeit newscasts to spin the truth about the recently passed Medicare bill. The spending plan includes "$12.6 million for advertising this winter, $18.5 million to publicize drug discount cards this spring, about $18.5 million this summer, and $30 million for a year of 'beneficiary education.'" Here are just a few things that money could be used for instead:

$80M IS MORE THAN NEEDED TO SET UP A SYSTEM TO GIVE SENIORS ACCESS TO MEDS FROM CANADA

- *According to incoming FDA Commissioner Lester Crawford, the FDA would need $58 million "to set up a program to reimport drugs from Canada" and give millions of seniors access to lower-priced FDA-approved drugs. The program could potentially save seniors hundreds of millions of dollars. Despite bipartisan support for the measure, the Administration has opposed the proposal and had it stripped out of the final Medicare bill.* [Source: Health News Daily]

$80M WOULD PREVENT THE WHITE HOUSE FROM ELIMINATING GRANTS TO LOW-INCOME HEALTH CLINICS

- *The 2005 Bush budget cuts the Community Access Program by $94 million (90.4%), providing only $10 million for 2005. This program funds grants to coordinate health-care services to the under-insured and uninsured offered by community providers such as public hospitals, community health centers, and disproportionate share hospitals.*[Source: House Budget Committee]

$80M WOULD RESTORE MOST OF THE WHITE HOUSE-PROPOSED CUTS TO RURAL HEALTH ACTIVITIES

- *The 2005 Bush budget provides $52 million for rural health activities, a $91 million cut (63.6%) from the 2004 enacted level.* [Source: House Budget Committee]

$80M WOULD RESTORE SOME OF THE CUTS TO VETERANS' MEDICAL CARE PROPOSED BY THE WHITE HOUSE

- *The 2005 Bush budget would provide $257 million less than the Congressional Budget Office estimates is needed to maintain purchasing power at the 2004 level. This cut would come exclusively out of funding for veterans for medical care and hospital services.* [Source: House Budget Committee]

$80M WOULD FULLY RESTORE CUTS TO MINORITY HEALTH PROGRAMS

- *The Bush budget would cut funding for the Office of Minority Health by 15%, from $55M to $47M.* [Source: American Public Health Association]

$80M WOULD RESTORE THE WHITE HOUSE-BACKED CUTS TO MEDICAID'S COMPUTER SYSTEMS

- *The Bush budge proposes to reduce federal funding by $80 million for needed computer upgrades to administer Medicaid. The cut means more of the cost will have to be picked up by the states.* [Source: CBPP]