



In Case You Missed It:

## The \$1.9 Trillion Gimmick

From [The Wall Street Journal](#)

Editorial

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

"Any day now, the House is expected to vote on a \$210 billion fiscal swindle that will prevent automatic cuts in Medicare payments to doctors. The entitlement's price controls are scheduled to fall by 21.5% in January and another 2% every year after that under a formula known as the sustainable growth rate, and eliminating the SGR was the price the American Medical Association demanded in return for its endorsement of the House health-care bill that passed earlier this month.

"The 'doc fix' was originally part of ObamaCare, until Mrs. Pelosi realized that adding a quarter-trillion dollars to the total tab made it difficult to pretend the bill would reduce the deficit. In the "Fiscal Responsibility" section of the press release announcing the separate SGR package, Democrats insist that it will be subject to "the 'pay as you go' principle of budget discipline," which "requires Congress to find a way to pay for any new spending" with new taxes or cuts.

"The Comedy Central punchline: 'A previous Congress established the policy for paying Medicare doctors, so the update for 2010 is not a new policy to be paid for....' In other words, ... Democrats rely on straight deficit spending ...

"A new Heritage Foundation study by the former Medicare trustee Thomas Saving and economist Andrew Rettenmaier finds that eliminating the SGR without offsets will increase Medicare's unfunded liabilities by \$1.9 trillion over the next 75 years."

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