

Dear Editor,

Newsweek recently republished a piece from FactCheck.org about Republican concerns regarding a controversial health care provision in the so-called stimulus package.

But, ironically, FactCheck's piece is in serious need of fact checking.

FactCheck.org accused Republicans of being deceptive: "Conservative politicians have claimed that the stimulus bill requires that doctors follow government orders on what medical treatments can and can't be prescribed. But the bill doesn't say that."

The truth, however, is that FactCheck is the one being deceptive. I didn't claim, as misleadingly suggested in the article, that the bill forces doctors to do its bidding – rather that it sets the stage for that dreaded day.

The bill sets aside \$1.1 billion for comparative effectiveness research – a method used in countries with government-run health care to decide which treatments and medicines to allow or deny patients.

And you don't have to take my word for it. Here's how the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee's own report on the stimulus described the provision: "Those items, procedures, and interventions... that are found to be less effective and in some cases, more expensive, will no longer be prescribed."

In fact, right now in Britain, 2,000 cancer patients may face premature death because of this kind of government research – the UK's health care bureaucracy has pulled the life-extending cancer drug Tarceva because it's been deemed too costly. What patients and doctors want doesn't matter.

Estimates show that leading Democrat health care reform proposals could put 40 million more Americans into a government-run health care plan in year-one – with

millions more likely to follow. Many politicians have openly called for mirroring the nationalized health care models of Canada, Britain and France – all of which ration medical care.

My argument is, and always has been, that this research will be used to wrench medical decisions away from you and your families – it has never been, as FactCheck.org falsely asserted, that this stimulus provision has the enforcement mechanism to do so. That will come when even more Americans are put on a government plan.

Tom Daschle himself – who nearly became Secretary Daschle – has called for a government health care board with the power to ration drugs and treatments.

In short, Americans have never been closer to losing their healthcare freedom. And I would hope, with so much at stake, that FactCheck.org will address this debate more honestly in the future.

Rep. John Shadegg