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Say Hello to My Little Invoice Generator

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There's a new crime racket in town: Medicare fraud.

From the Associated Press:

Lured by easier money and shorter prison sentences, Mafia figures and other violent criminals are increasingly moving into Medicare fraud and spilling blood over what once a white-collar crime. ...

For criminals, Medicare schemes offer a greater payoff and carry much shorter prison sentences than offenses such as drug trafficking or robbery.

"We've seen more people that used to be involved in (dealing) drugs are switching over to health care fraud because it's not as dangerous," Miami FBI spokeswoman Judy Orihuela said.

Interesting - hugely lucrative and much more lenient penalties? Just think how different the plot of Goodfellas would've been. Who wouldn't love a movie with the opening line "As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a... Medicare biller"?

Medicare fraud is no new scam, however. The Cato Institute's Michael Cannon has written extensively about the problem - caused partly by the agency not reviewing claims properly. (Less oversight is far cheaper than in-depth investigations, of course.) In a rare display of bipartisan unity, both parties agree that this should be addressed (eureka!) Unfortunately, it seems Congress can't - or won't - address this problem without tying it to a lot of other huge reforms.

Our elected officials shouldn't exploit one of the few elements of health reform that the public unilaterally supports - fraud reduction - to advance their own agendas. Let's make small, incremental changes, starting with cutting the fraud. That's an offer the American people can't refuse.