

Resource 6 (1 of 4)**Medicare: Visualizing the Debate**

Teacher's Guide

The debate about Medicare, its value, and its affordability continues today. Use any of the following three cartoons to identify how the current debate is framed. (Larger illustrations are provided here for reproduction and distribution, or projection.) For each cartoon, ask students to study the cartoon for several minutes. Ask them what they notice, drawing students out on the detail of what they see. If students jump to an interpretation of the cartoon, ask them for the basis of the interpretation and ask other students if they agree or disagree. Consider the following questions to draw students out on each cartoon.



Why might this artist equate elderly Americans who receive government entitlements with Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden?

[The artist could be insinuating that the rising federal debt we are accruing as a result of entitlement spending is as dangerous as threats to our country from war or terrorism. On the other hand, the artist could be drawing an intentionally extreme connection to lampoon the political rhetoric surrounding entitlement spending.]



This editorial cartoon by Gregor Duncan accompanied an Op-Ed piece in a March 1935 issue of *Life* magazine. The editorial, written in the midst of the Depression and before the passage of Social Security, took no position on which among a number of proposals for old age pensions, unemployment insurance, or health benefits was best, but called for action on a plan that would work. Ask students:

How does the drawing seem to anticipate current debates about the cost of Social Security and, to a greater extent, Medicare?

[Students should see that the drawing of a young person carrying a very comfortable and relaxed-seeming elderly person suggests that some solutions to the care of the elderly put an unfair burden on the younger generation.]



Look closely at the labeling on the pill bottle. What point is the artist, Drew Sheneman, making about proposed cuts in the Medicare program?

[The artist is using the labeling conventions for warnings on medication side effects to describe the possible consequences of cuts to the Medicare program. Students will probably not know that the elderly poor have been reported to eat cat food to cut down on expenses.]

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TOP U.S. THREATS IN..

CAM OTTAWA CITIZEN
Capitolartoons.com
synkam.com



1991



2001



2011

by Cameron Cardow, politicalcartoons.com

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by Gregor Duncan

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