

Bush plans healthcare cuts in new budget

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. President George Bush was expected to call for large cuts in Medicare growth in his new budget, due Monday. The president also was expected to seek major savings in Medicaid again. Healthcare savings are a crucial part of the Bush plan for a budget surplus by 2012. The 2009 budget likely will be the first \$3 trillion spending request by a president, The New York Times said Thursday. The White House anticipates higher deficits in 2008 and 2009, however, before a surplus can be built, reflecting the current economic weakness and cost of a stimulus package. Budget documents showed that Bush is expected to propose changes in Medicare to save \$6 billion in the next year and \$91 billion from 2009-13. Plans call for a reduction in Medicaid, the insurance program for low-income people, of \$1.2 billion next year and nearly \$14 billion over five years. The budget proposal won't seek money for a full year of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the report said, but only enough to continue combat operations for several months until a new president takes office. p>

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