

Don't ignore debate

As a nurse practitioner, I am dedicated to advocating for each of my patients' health care needs and to empowering them to lead healthy lives.

Unfortunately, I see an increasing number of patients whose families are now without health care coverage. This not only becomes a stressor for families trying to figure out how to pay medical bills and purchase prescriptions, but also becomes a problem related to access to medical care when seeking help is delayed. These delays often result in sicker patients, increased health care costs and losses in productivity that, in turn, affect the economy.

Passage of a Medicaid expansion bill in Missouri would be in our best interest, but to ignore the debate about it helps no one and may prove to be a costly mistake. Each of us has a voice, and together that voice is heard. Residents of Southwest Missouri can easily call or write their state legislators and actively encourage them to consider and debate Medicaid expansion.

**Debbie Smith
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