

Medicaid expansion: Politics put ahead of people

Nov. 20, 2013 |

news-leader.com

Springfield

By not participating in Medicaid expansion, our legislators are putting partisan politics above people.

The arguments against Medicaid expansion are illogical and transparent attempts at opposing Obamacare.

Not only did Missouri pass a law prohibiting trained navigators from speaking to people who currently have insurance bought from an insurance agent, they also are not allowed to give consumers (who may have little to no experience with insurance plans) advice about the benefits, terms and conditions of the health care plans in the marketplace.

If the navigator program sounds familiar, it is because it was successfully used in educating seniors about their options in the 2004 Medicare prescription drug expansion under Bush. Of course, Obama is our president this time, so the navigator program must be completely obstructed at all costs.

The proposed Medicaid expansion would give 260,000 more Missourians access to health care. Expanding Medicaid would allow a family of four making about \$32,000 a year or less to access health care. The best part is that the federal government is going to pay 100 percent of the expansion costs for the first three years. After that, Missouri starts paying a small share of the cost that is eventually capped at 10 percent in 2020.

By not expanding Medicaid we are paying our federal dollars into a pot distributed to states that have wisely chosen to pass expansion. Expanding Medicaid would create 24,000 jobs in Missouri in 2014 alone.

The Chamber of Commerce and other business groups have come out supporting Medicaid expansion because they realize that passing this bill will be good for the Missouri economy.