

# Letter - Ruby Payne: Discussion forgot about health care

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Earlier this month, [national poverty expert Ruby Payne visited Springfield](#) ([/article/20140213/NEWS01/302130069/Poverty-expert-gives-1-500-training-session-new-perspective](#)) to educate on the cycle of poverty and how we can break it for the better of our community.

While Payne's discussion was undoubtedly relevant, I can't help but notice the missed opportunity to address access to health care as an indicator of the poverty cycle.

The discussion around Payne's visit neglected to include the impact that lack of health care has on an individual.

[Numerous studies have been performed \(http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11826239\)](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11826239) to show the positive impact that adequate health care has on low-income children; if we want to truly make a difference and break the cycle of poverty, we must start by expanding Medicaid in Missouri.

In order to empower children and families, they must have access to affordable health care. We know children live healthier lives when they and their parents have access to regular, affordable, quality health care.

The Missouri legislature faces a choice: Continue the cycle of poverty by denying critical health care resources to the families who need it most, or pass Medicaid expansion and sincerely make an impact on those in need in Missouri.

We have to continue this discussion with our legislators, and we can do that by calling our senators at 1-877-383-8884.

Crystal Brigman is an organizer with Missouri Health Care for All.

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May 16, 2014, 8:37 a.m.