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Helping Missouri's elderly and disabled

By MIKE CUNNINGHAM, state senator Jun 3, 2016

LEGISLATIVE COLUMN

MIKE CUNNINGHAM,
state senator



This session the General Assembly was able to advance a piece of legislation that addresses an issue I've been working on for 12 years now. House Bill 1565 is an effort to expand Medicaid access to thousands of elderly and disabled Missourians over the next few years by modifying the asset limits for potential program participants.

Working from 2018 through 2021, HB 1565 would increase the asset limits for MO HealthNet blind and disabled claimants from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for individuals, and from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for married couples. This means that single and married individuals looking to qualify for Missouri Medicaid will now be able to hold a larger amount of savings and still qualify for coverage. Elderly and disabled individuals should not be forced to spend down their assets in order to receive medical assistance from the state. Our at-risk citizens can almost always use more money in their savings accounts, and HB 1565 allow them to save up for actual costs and emergencies. With the extra savings, our at-risk citizens will be able to afford expensive medical supplies, home and appliance costs, auto repairs and other necessary expenses.

Many elderly residents of the Show-Me State have had to do things like spend down their assets before moving into nursing homes. It doesn't make sense that an older, at-risk citizen should have to deplete his or her savings before being able to receive much-needed assistance. House Bill 1565 is a cost-effective way to help our state's residents who need it most. These people are often on the brink, in terms of both medical and financial stress, and this bill will simply help give them some additional security.

It is estimated that the new asset caps would add approximately 10,000 Missourians to the state Medicaid program through 2022 – at an affordable cost of around \$45 million. The bill is currently on the governor's desk, awaiting approval.

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Bio Box

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