

# MO Democrats Release Healthcare Priorities

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SPRINGFIELD, Mo. -- The Missouri Democratic Party says it wants to be a part of the solution when it comes to healthcare, so it released a list of priorities it would like to see at the state level.

According to Democrats, Healthy Missouri would offer more options and lower costs. Chair of the Missouri Democratic Part, Stephen Webber, and State Representative Crystal Quade, D0Springfield, announced the policy guidelines at a press conference in Springfield Wednesday afternoon, where they were joined by a Springfield mother who shared her story.

"My first child was born with an unknown genetic disorder, and this means that doctors are unsure of what causes some of his disabilities," said Lexi Amos.

Amos says her son went about a year and a half without healthcare after her husband was honorably discharged until the ACA was implemented and they were able to enroll at a reasonable cost.

"When you're developing, five months, six months without access to a speech therapist, an occupational therapist, when that's what you need, you a missing vital time," she said.

It's to protect families like Amos', the MO Democratic Party says it released its own set of solutions.

"We spent a lot of time in Jeff City saying 'no' and trying to stop a lot of the things that came down," said State Rep. Quade. "But it's also equally important, if not more, that we offer solutions."

Healthy Missouri outlines, among other things, policies that would allow individuals to buy into Medicaid at actual cost, fully restore the MORx program, force pharmaceutical companies to disclose information on price hikes and ban them from giving gifts to physicians.

It would also increase access to contraception for women under Medicaid and enact a full expansion of Medicaid under the ACA.

"Medicaid has issues and there are a lot of things in it that we need to work on, but it's still the most effective healthcare option that we have in the state," said Quade. "There's very low overhead and if we allow folks to buy into that program, it will only help with costs because we will have more people in it."

The plan would also create a prescription drug monitoring program, which Rep. Quade says the current government has failed to do.

"It's going to be a contract possibly with Express Scripts and monitoring things on their end. But it doesn't actually provide the protection to doctor-shopping and for doctors to have access to that information," said Quade. "It's not a true PDMP to what we know it as throughout the rest of the country."

Quade says an expansion of Medicaid would also create 26,000 new jobs in Missouri.

She says Healthy Missouri is a framework Democrats will follow to shape legislation that will ensure more and better coverage for all.

"While my son is important and amazing to me, he is by no means the only child who needs healthcare," said Amos.

Quade says these items would be introduced as separate bills and she plans to propose some of them in the next legislative session.

The policies will of course also depend on what the federal government does regarding healthcare and be amended accordingly.