

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## **Proposed Medicaid change is bad for Missouri's health**

Jan 20, 2018



Missouri Representative David Sater District 68 Republican Cassville

At the start of Missouri's legislative session, Sen. David Sater, R-Cassville, introduced SB 562, which would change funding for Missouri's Medicaid program into a dangerous block grant. Currently, 64.1 percent of Missouri's

Medicaid budget is paid for by the federal government. In other words, for every \$1 Missouri spends on Medicaid, the federal government matches \$1.83.

Changing the funding to a block grant would stop this federal match, and Missouri would instead be given a pre-set amount to spend on Medicaid each year from the federal government. Generally, fixed block grant amounts are initially determined by a state's current or historical spending, with yearly increases happening much more slowly (i.e. at the rate of inflation) than the projected growth for federal Medicaid spending.

This means that federal financial assistance for Missouri's Medicaid program will fall every year. If an unexpected emergency like a flu epidemic or natural disaster occurs, if more people are added to Medicaid, or if health care costs rise faster, our state government will have to foot the bill.

SB 562 is especially concerning given the prospect of a revenue shortfall in Missouri with tax cuts. If Missouri is unable to generate adequate funds for Medicaid, the state will have to cut eligibility, covered services, and/or provider reimbursements for the program. This means that more than 965,000 people covered by Medicaid — mostly seniors, people with disabilities, and kids — will be cut off from health care in some capacity.

I am a future health care provider, and SB 562 makes me worried about the health of my future patients and the state of Missouri.

*Akua Nuako • St. Louis*



From the mailbag: Control over women apparently appeals to Greitens