

# Expanding Medicare, health of OMC are vital concerns

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To the editor: I attended the meeting with Mr. Cunningham. I was under the impression there would be a meeting of the minds so to speak. Mr. Cunningham came with his mind made up. I would like to use this letter to give my answer to a question he posed. "Should the state be involved in saving hospitals." My answer is yes. Our legislators are supposedly trying to bring jobs to the state. Why not try to keep the jobs that are here viable?

Since the beginning of civilization citizens of a city, county, state and country have paid taxes. What is the purpose of those taxes: Provide protection for our citizens from the lawless and make sure our country is protected from enemies at home and abroad, make sure our infrastructure is sound, to support local and federal government. To adequately educate our children so they will be able to grow and work in an ever-changing world. To make sure our citizens are healthy. The more educated and healthy, the less burden they are on our society.

Everybody pays taxes. If you don't earn enough to send a check into the state or federal government you still pay taxes. We pay fuel tax, personal property tax, real estate tax, taxes on goods we purchase. Taxes on telephones and the list goes on. I believe everyone should pay their fair share.

OMC is not only a place to go for the healing of the mind, body and spirit. It is also the largest provider of jobs in this area. People that work there contribute to our economy. They purchase clothing, vehicles, homes and their household needs. They not only provide for their families, they pay taxes. We have only lived here 22 years. In that time period this community has grown so much. There were little or no businesses north of Porter Wagoner Boulevard and Gibson. South of the Jan Howard Expressway. Those changes were made because somebody paid taxes. Our federal government has given grant money to our police departments, fire departments and schools.

We now have a wonderful community health center that started out as just one woman's dream. Children in every school now have access to dental care. Thanks to the support of places like the United Way and private business donations as well as federal funding. Our community health center now has nine providers, Not only have people been able to get their needed medication they have been enabled to get it for a co-pay they can afford. I wonder how many strokes, heart attacks, complications from diabetes have been prevented. When the idea for SMCHC (Southern Missouri Community Health Center) was first presented to our community we were told, "The money is there; it will be spent. Do you want it for West Plains or will it go someplace else? The community wasn't sure at first; the ball finally got rolling.

There are now funds available to expand Medicaid to all of our citizens. Our tax money is going to pay for Medicaid expansion. Do we want it spent in our state or somewhere else? I say keep our tax dollars here. Why the big no? Over and over we hear the words Obamacare like it is a curse word. Now I have friends who would not otherwise be able to go to the doctor buying health insurance that they can afford.

Mr. Cunningham said he wanted to see some "skin" in the game. Well Mr. Cunningham I am here to tell you that our citizens are not lazy gravy-sucking pigs. We are willing to pay co-pays. We just need a break. It is inhumane for people in this day and age to go without preventive care or say to the largest employer in the area our legislators don't care if you sink or swim. My husband is alive and viable today because he was able to get a colonoscopy. The cost in money and human suffering could be reduced by regular screenings is not measurable.

So I again say yes it is the duty of the state to keep business's and humans viable. This community is giving and caring. Just look at Samaritan Outreach (Center). Look at whoever it was that gave our high school students shoes. I would ask everyone to read Matthew Chapter 25 Verses 33 through 46. After you read that, then tell me you are a Christian and do not support Medicaid expansion or the Affordable Care Act.

Jean Hammond,

Peace Valley