

# Urge Mo. lawmakers to expand Medicaid

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To the editor: Why Missouri does not have Medicaid expansion:

If health, education and economic opportunity of our citizens were really important to Republican legislators they would vote for expanded Medicaid.

The positive impact of expanded Medicaid, not just on the enrollees but including all the indirect effects, is not refutable. It can be denied and ignored, but there is no contrary evidence. The Republican opposition to Medicaid expansion is solely based on opposition to any program coming from the Obama Administration. Remember, the national Republicans met just after the 2008 election and pledged to oppose any program from the Obama Administration. Our state Republicans repeat that they won't vote for Medicaid expansion until the Medicaid program is fixed. They don't want to hear any sob stories. But in 2005 Republicans adopted sweeping Medicaid cutbacks. More than 100,000 people lost coverage, and many more faced reduced benefits and higher cost sharing. Are we willing to see another "fix" like that? What have they done to fix Medicaid since then? If they really wanted to fix Medicaid they could pass Medicaid expansion and use the savings to make additional changes to the program.

The effects of expanding Medicaid go far beyond the economic impact, but the economic impact alone should be enough to get our representatives to vote for it. According to a study done by the University of Missouri School of Medicine expanding Medicaid could result in: 24,000 jobs in 2014; from 2014 – 2020 a labor income increase of \$7 billion; \$9.6 billion in value-added output to the economy from 2014-2020; \$856 million in additional state and local taxes from 2014 to 2020 and \$1.4 billion in federal taxes due to the increase in jobs and economic activity, for a total tax collected of \$2.3 billion; the elimination of cost shifting means a family of four could expect to save \$1,688 due to reduced premiums over the period 2014- 2020, and an individual would save \$610 over this time frame; from 2014-2020, privately insured individuals and families could potentially save nearly \$1 billion due to reductions in premiums. What economic data do Republicans have to reject expanding Medicaid? The only arguments I have heard, without any data, is a belief that the federal government won't have the money to continue supporting the expansion. But won't that be something the Republicans would like? If that happens the program would change and Republicans would have a story to use to attack the federal government.

For the health and wealth of our citizens please do what you can to convince our Republican representatives to vote for Medicaid expansion.

Jim Vokac,

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