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Coronavirus pandemic shows need for affordable healthcare

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To the editor:

The Covid-19 outbreak has highlighted the need for affordable, accessible healthcare in rural areas.

Since Missouri chose not to participate in Medicaid expansion, a key part of Obamacare, five rural hospitals have closed in Missouri’s 8th Congressional District. Our state leaders have reduced Missourians access to healthcare and deprived the state of federal dollars which would have covered the majority of the costs to provide Medicaid to people with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level.

Now low-income families are facing the threat of the coronavirus without any coverage.

Brock Slabach of the National Rural Hospital Association stated that expanding Medicaid is a "shovel-ready program for investing in the health care of the rural community," Fortunately Missourians have the power to affect change this November.

Recently Healthcare for Missouri announced that a Medicaid Expansion petition initiative has obtained enough signatures to put the measure on the ballot this November. Volunteers across the state were able to exceed the
number of signatures needed before the May 3 deadline. Nearly 350,000 signatures were submitted with only 172,000 needed.

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, it is more obvious than ever that working families need affordable healthcare. 352,000 more people will have insurance coverage if the measure passes. Your vote for Medicaid expansion this November will help hundreds of thousands of Missourians who desperately need accessible healthcare during this public health crisis.

Janet Fossey

Salem