

*“Nothing is politically right  
which is morally wrong.”*  
– Daniel O’Connell



*“Free and fair discussion will ever be  
found the firmest friend of truth.”*  
– George Campbell

# MISSOURI SENATE

**Senator Bill Stouffer**  
District 21

**Capitol Building, Room 332**  
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## Meeting Medical Needs

At 10 p.m. a man walks into Lexington’s hospital and receives a prescription for OxyContin. He does the same in Carrollton at midnight and in Richmond at 3 a.m. He pays \$2, and the state pays \$500 for the first prescription, which is cut and later sold illegally for \$4,000. The next two prescriptions are purchased with the proceeds from two other pharmacies and sold again—and the state, pharmacies and hospitals are all unaware.

In Macon, nursing home employees are flushing \$800 of medicine down the toilet because a patient’s prescription, paid by Medicaid, has changed. By law, if a patient is no longer prescribed traditionally packaged medicine, that medication must be thrown away.

Later that afternoon, doctors in Boonville, Excelsior Springs and Kearney are struggling to report Medicaid claims to a state system run by a 1973 model computer. (Yes, we are still using a computer that is more than 30 years old.) Other doctors are refusing to see Medicaid patients because the state is slow or unable to pay costs the patient is unwilling or unable to pay.

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And still, there are those who say that fixing Medicaid is out of the question.

I recently met with taxpayers; doctors; pharmacists; representatives from hospitals, nursing homes, and sheltered workshops; and Dr. Mike Ditmore, Director of Medical Services, in Richmond to discuss the problems we are facing. With a new Medicaid program being proposed next year, I believe it is important for our rural health-care providers, taxpayers and consumers to shape this new system.

The most important lesson I learned is that the time has come for change. I wouldn't be a very successful farmer if I used the same equipment I did when I first got into the business. In fact, I don't think I'd still be in business today without change. However, our state's Medicaid system was established in 1965 and has not seen significant changes since that time.

Yet there are some that think the system is not broken—that continuing to spend more money on the program is the answer. Even with reforms, we are spending at least \$33 million more next year on Medicaid, exceeding spending on education. Only Tennessee spends a larger portion of their state budget on Medicaid than Missouri, and now the Volunteer State has been forced to similarly overhaul its system.

In an effort to meet medical needs, sustain access to quality care, and honor taxpayers, true leaders are stepping forward for much-needed reforms. The most vulnerable citizens will still be provided for, and a broken system will be improved.

If you have any questions regarding this or any other matter, or would like to receive these weekly reports electronically, please call our office toll free at (866) 768-3987 or e-mail [bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).

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