



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

For the Week of:
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Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Contact: Aaron Baker
(573) 751-1507

The New Medicaid: Preventing the Costs of Poor Health

- 82 percent of males over age 45 failed to receive a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) screening in 2006.
- 73 percent women over age 40 did not receive a mammogram in the last 30 months.
- 96 percent of females over 18 did not receive a PAP test.
- 73 percent of patients with a diagnosis of cardiac disease did not have a lipid panel in 2006.

If these numbers represented Missouri citizens we would have groups in our offices everyday telling us to pass legislation that would help catch cancer at an early stage and reduce the number of massive heart attacks.

Luckily, these percentages can be changed. The percentages listed above are from Missourians who are on Medicaid. Mo HealthNet, which is replacing the current Medicaid system, changes these numbers dramatically. The welfare of our elderly and disabled is a primary focus of the Missouri Legislature. Creating a new health-care system to help Missouri citizens receive the most basic care has been on the minds of many after cuts were made to the Medicaid system back in 2005.

Senate Bill 577, also known as the "Missouri Health Improvement Act of 2007," creates Mo HealthNet, which focuses on **preventive care** over more costly treatments, such as emergency room visits. The bill also emphasizes transparency and consumer choice. People should have a higher quality of life while at the same time staying healthy, and that is what this bill is set out to achieve.

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The bill includes incentives for doctors and patients to decrease overall costs. This is a major refocus in the way we deliver healthcare and a major step forward for the people in the state. Through this bill, physicians can receive more funding for reducing hospital stays. A program has also been created to allow employers to use tax-free dollars to pay the premiums for private insurance for uninsured workers.

The new system provides a health-care advocate to help patients in accessing healthcare. This advocate is a healthcare professional that serves as a patient's home base for both prevention and when they need medical attention. Patients who maintain health improvement plans, such as receiving screenings and reaching health goals set by their advocate, earn credits through an awards system which allows them to use the credits for co-pays, prescription drugs and other health-related expenses. These preventive measures allow people to take responsibility for their own healthcare and introduce the patient back into the equation.

Amendments added onto the bill expand the original plan to offer prevention and healthcare services to an estimated 90,000 low-income women who lack access to employer-provided health insurance and who meet eligibility income requirements. This measure will allow women who might not otherwise be able to receive screenings and detect destructive diseases like cervical cancer. Stronger penalties against providers convicted of fraud and rewards for whistleblowers were also added to SB 577.

The old Medicaid system did not focus on wellness, prevention and personal responsibility. By providing better healthcare, lowering costs to consumers and awarding those who are doing the right thing, we can provide this new program that will save money but most importantly can help save and improve the lives of Missourians.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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