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## **Newt Gingrich Congratulates Missouri Lawmakers on New Law that Goes After Medicaid Fraud and Abuse** *Rep. Brian Yates, Sen. Scott T. Rupp, and Sen. Eric Schmitt Worked for New Law to Bring Transparency to Medicaid Costs*

ST. LOUIS – Former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and founder of the Center for Health Transformation Newt Gingrich today commended a group of Missouri lawmakers for being the first in the nation to make it possible for anyone to be able to find what a provider charged for a health care service covered by the MO HealthNet program with just the click of a mouse. Gingrich praised the work of State Representative Brian Yates, R-Lee's Summit, Senator Scott T. Rupp, R-St. Charles, Speaker Ron Richard, R-Joplin, and Senator Eric Schmitt, R-Glendale, at a press conference at the St. Louis County Library headquarters. Yates and Rupp sponsored and passed [House Bill 577](#) that was signed into law by the governor earlier this month. Schmitt added language to the bill creating the MO HealthNet Data Transparency program.

Gingrich said the MO HealthNet Data Transparency program is the first of its kind in the nation.

"Missouri has taken a bold and transformational step to create a more transparent and more efficient care delivery system," Gingrich said. "Their efforts will prove crucial in a national attempt to eliminate the fraud, waste and abuse in our healthcare system."

The program works to decrease fraud and abuse in the state-run healthcare system. The Center for Health Transformation reports that outright fraud accounts for as much as 10 percent of all healthcare spending nationally, totaling more than \$200 billion every year. In 2005, the *Kansas City Star* estimated that fraudulent Medicaid claims in Missouri could total up to \$575 million a year.

"It is unacceptable that upwards of half a billion dollars a year are potentially lost to provider fraud in our state's Medicaid system," said Schmitt, who added the transparency language mirrored after Senate Bill 549 that he introduced. "Making these costs transparent is a big step in helping us catch those providers who cheat the system, essentially stealing precious tax dollars that should go to care for our state's most vulnerable citizens."

"From the largest hospital to the smallest health center – any provider that serves the MO HealthNet community – will participate," said Yates, the bill's lead sponsor. "Making all this data public will allow the state to move more quickly in indentifying fraudulent providers, helping us make sure state funding goes to those in need as well as lowering or slowing the increase in cost of healthcare to everyone."

The provision requires the MO HealthNet Division, by August 28, 2010, to create a database that, while protecting the privacy of MO HealthNet recipients' information, would make claim information available online. The provision requires the information provided be in a format that is easily accessible, usable, and understandable to the public.

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“By working together to make the system more transparent, the House and Senate have put the brakes on healthcare fraud and abuse,” said Richard, the bill’s co-sponsor. “House Bill 577 puts Missouri on the leader board for healthcare transformation, and we will continue to work diligently to further healthcare reform in our state.”

The information will be available to those interested in improving the quality of care provided to individuals eligible for MO HealthNet programs and services, as well as researchers, healthcare providers, and individuals interested in reducing the prevalence of waste and fraud under the program.

“Making this information public will help more Missourians make better informed decisions on where to seek their services, as it helps identify good providers as well as targets those who cheat the system at the expense of taxpayers and Missourians who truly need the care,” said Rupp, who handled the bill in the Senate.

To learn more about the bill, visit [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov) and keyword search HB577. The Center for Health Transformation is dedicated to helping create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Intelligent Health System that saves lives and saves money.

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