



September 23, 2009

Federal Healthcare Plan Could Force Skyrocketing Costs on Our State

We in Southeast Missouri are all deeply concerned about the federal healthcare plan currently being debated in Washington, D.C. Currently, the healthcare legislation tops 1,000-pages. The proposal contains measures to increase government control, lessen personal choice in healthcare and institutes a serious and disturbing spike in spending. While the federal House and Senate have some differences in their proposals, each health reform bill in Congress achieves part of its insurance coverage expansion by increasing eligibility for Medicaid (also called MO HealthNet in Missouri). Proposals would increase Missouri's eligibility significantly. While I support expanding healthcare to those in Missouri who need help, I am strongly opposed to spending on the federal level that will seriously impact Missouri and force us to spend outside of our state's ability.

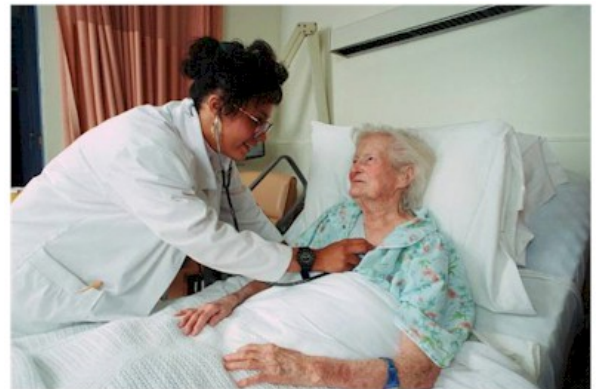


Currently, Missouri has one of the lower income eligibility cutoffs for state-sponsored healthcare. It is not an easy task to balance costs and coverage, but the state continues to explore options that will allow us to increase access to healthcare and help more families, without breaking the bank. During the upcoming legislative session, I expect many of these ideas to be debated, and I am hopeful that we can find an affordable solution. We cannot have the federal government barging in and raising

costs in an economy that does not support these increases. The federal plan would increase the eligibility cut-off to approximately \$2,440 a month, nearly seven times our current eligibility cut-off. This sort of skyrocketing cost is just plain unmanageable and could add more than a billion dollars to the cost to administer Medicaid in Missouri.

We are currently facing a tight budget year, and the last thing Missouri needs is significant financial pressure from Congress to raise costs. The Legislature has worked hard, even in these difficult times, to make sure Missouri's budget is balanced and fiscally responsible. In order to continue this practice while also succumbing to the federal government's healthcare cost increases, we would need to find the money somewhere, forcing the state to raise taxes or make massive cuts to areas like education.

I join most Americans when I say that our country's health care system is in need of innovative solutions to fix the problems we now face. Under no circumstances, however, will I support increasing costs so that a tax increase or cuts to education are necessary. No matter how fast the printing presses in Washington work, Missouri will not spend money we do not have or place the burden of expanding government on taxpayers.



Our country was founded on the principles of empowering individuals, not expanding the government so that it interferes with our personal choices. This is a fundamental ideal that I will continue to uphold.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions, and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.senate.mo.gov/crowell>.

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