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Expanding Medicaid will better serve those already insured

Missouri just paid a consultant \$2.7 million to suggest ways to save money in Medicaid (["Medicaid overhaul could save state \\$1 billion annually, report claims," Feb. 12](#)). Missouri has studied ways to transform Medicaid since 2005, and the newest report ignores the obvious.

Gov. Mike Parson wants to maximize tax dollars spent on Medicaid, and wants every Missourian to have access to quality health care to improve our workforce. He could have both but needs to consider options not included in the \$2.7 million report.

Missouri refuses to expand Medicaid, creating a doughnut hole of uninsured adults with incomes between eligibility for Medicaid and Affordable Care Act subsidies. These uninsured are primarily our low-wage workers. Being uninsured creates stress and instability, limiting the ability to make economic gain.

Numerous reports document that expanding Medicaid could save money. Medicaid funding is a mix of state general revenue and provider taxes matched by federal funds. About two-thirds of every Medicaid dollar for adults is federal money. For the expansion population, federal funds pay 90 percent of each dollar.

For example, Missouri currently provides mental health care to more than 40,000 adults, paying 100 percent of the cost. By expanding Medicaid, Missouri would pay 10 percent to 34 percent of the cost. The Missouri Office of Administration affirms that savings to the state would outpace the costs of expanding Medicaid.

The \$2.7 million study doesn't have the answers. To realize Gov. Parson's desire to provide every Missourian health care, we must focus on better serving those already insured and expanding Medicaid. Thoughtful transformation and expansion will assure that every Missourian has health care and will maximize tax dollars.

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