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Dear Dispatch:

I was disappointed by the article on Friday about the cost of the Medicaid expansion because it overstated the costs and understated the benefits of the expansion. Medicaid is a bargain that helps Ohio in many ways.

Medicaid is jointly funded by the state and federal governments. Currently, Ohio pays about 40% and Washington pays 60%, and in some situations the federal portion is much higher, perhaps as high as 100%. This means that every dollar that Ohio spends on Medicaid is matched by at least \$1.50 of federal funds. This is a good investment in Ohio and Ohioans.

Studies have shown that each dollar of Medicaid spending in Ohio generates \$3.15 in overall economic activity as the spending spreads out from health care to the local and state economies. This spending will create jobs in health care and elsewhere and stabilize our communities.

The expanded Medicaid eligibility will result in lowered health care costs for Ohioans with private insurance because it will reduce the number of uninsured patients in the state. The cost of caring for the uninsured is shared by all of us in increased premiums and costs of services as health care providers shift costs to insured patients. Reducing the number of uninsured Ohioans will reduce the costs for patients already insured.

This Medicaid expansion will improve the health, lives, and self sufficiency of 500,000+ Ohioans and their families. It will allow them to access medically necessary care and achieve better health. They will be more likely to be able to get and keep jobs and add productively to the economy.

Finally, this is the right thing to do. Medicaid is not a perfect program, but it already provides cost efficient access to health care for more than 2 million Ohioans, nearly 20% of our residents. We should have expanded Medicaid eligibility years ago so that more of our friends, neighbors and family members could have access to the health care they deserve.

This Medicaid expansion is good for Ohioans and Ohio 's economy.

Eugene R. King, Director

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