

Letters to the editor for Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Wednesday

Posted May 13, 2015 at 12:01 AM

---

### Expand Medicaid in Florida

For months, people like me have been waiting for the Florida Legislature to come to a budget agreement. At the center of this issue is the refusal of House Republicans and Gov. Rick Scott to accept federal funds to expand Medicaid. Yet they have no problem receiving federal funds to pay hospitals for uncompensated care. Without Medicaid's expansion, 800,000 low-wage workers (people with jobs) will continue to be caught in limbo, making too much to qualify for the current Medicaid program and not enough to afford any other kind of health insurance, even if their employers sponsor it.

Everything we know about effective preventive care tells us that we get better health outcomes if we direct people to a medical home for primary care, not hospitals for episodic care.

Helping Floridians settle into medical homes through Medicaid means that our tax dollars are going to relatively inexpensive primary care, not expensive hospitals.

The money for Medicaid is guaranteed by law to be paid; the state will never have to pay more than 10 percent of the cost. That's a great deal for us.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, states that have expanded Medicaid are seeing significant reductions in uncompensated care costs. Hospitals in those states had an estimated savings of \$2.6 billion last year over that seen in non-expansion states.

Mark Brewer, CEO of the Central Florida Foundation, points out that it is costing the business community about 8 percent more to provide health insurance to their employees because of the burden of uninsured care being shifted to those who can pay. Recently, more than 150 people representing the business community, hospitals and civic leaders met in Orlando to discuss this untenable situation, and called on our lawmakers to expand the Medicaid program. As a business owner, I have experienced these increases. I'm weary of our elected officials playing politics with Floridians' lives.

Florida leaders are spurning billions of federal dollars that are, in part, paid for by Florida citizens. It is not very often that doing the right thing also means doing the smart business thing, but the expansion of Medicaid just makes sense.

I encourage people in our community, especially those in leadership positions, to contact our representatives and let our voices be heard.

M. Jayson Meyer

Daytona Beach

*Meyer is the CEO of Synergy Billing in Daytona Beach. He can be reached at*

[mjaysonmeyer@synergybilling.com](mailto:mjaysonmeyer@synergybilling.com).

