## **House Minority Caucus**

## **Rep. Crystal Quade**

## House Minority Leader

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**Progress on Medicaid enrollment crisis an encouraging sign**

*House Democrats note positive steps, say more can be done*

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – After a year of raising the alarm about the Medicaid enrollment crisis that has resulted in more than 100,000 Missouri children losing access to coverage, House Democrats are encouraged by recent movement among majority Republicans toward addressing the problem.

“There can be no doubt at this point that tens of thousands of Missouri children wrongly lost their health care access, often without warning or explanation,” said House Minority Leader Crystal Quade, D-Springfield. “With key Republican lawmakers willing to acknowledge the crisis and look for solutions, we have a strong shot at achieving a resolution to ensure Missouri children receive the medical care they deserve.”

Among the efforts to address the situation is House Bill 1960 filed by state Rep. Mary Elizabeth Coleman, R-Arnold. HB 1960 would streamline the cumbersome process of applying not just for Medicaid but for other public assistance programs, including SNAP, TANF and child-care assistance. The House General Laws Committee was scheduled to vote on the bill today.

Democratic bills to help solve the problem include House Bill 1670 sponsored by state Rep. Sarah Unsicker, D-Shrewsbury, to require that once children are enrolled in Medicaid they will remain enrolled for a full year before their eligibility needs to be reverified. Such action would greatly reduce the turnover of children going on and off the program. The speaker has assigned similar legislation – House Bill 2379 sponsored by Republican state Rep. Steve Helms of Springfield – to the Health and Mental Health Policy Committee, where it awaits a hearing.

Representative Unsicker also has filed House Bill 2439 to remove burdensome administrative requirements from the Medicaid re-enrollment process and require the state to follow federal regulations that give families 30 days to return paperwork, instead of the 10 days Missouri has been giving them.

In addition, Quade will file legislation to streamline the Missouri Eligibility Determination and Enrollment System and emphasize that the eligibility of every person in a family receiving Medicaid must be individually verified. This legislation is intended to stop the current situation in which a parent loses his or her Medicaid eligibility, but the whole family is kicked off the program, even though the children are still entitled to coverage.

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