



Opinion

Care costs

Saturday, February 26, 2005

To the editor:

The editors of the Lawrence Journal-World are correct to point out the need for decisive action on Medicaid in the Feb. 16 editorial, "Costly care." Medicaid costs are increasing beyond our ability to maintain benefits going forward, and significant reform is necessary to avoid collapse.

The recommendations go awry, however, in supporting changes that will likely only make matters worse. Expanding coverage through HealthWave, for instance, is irresponsible in that it merely adds more to the rolls of a broken program and increases its financial instability.

Florida and other states are working to develop innovative approaches to this crisis that go far beyond reshuffling agencies and offering citizens more of what has not worked in the past. Reducing costly mandates, promoting lower-cost health savings accounts, offering tax credits for the uninsured and incorporating consumer choice into Medicaid are just some of the ideas on the table.

If legislators in Kansas want to take truly decisive action and help those least able to afford coverage, then they must also take a leadership role and be equally realistic about the need for reform.

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