

NEWS RELEASE

From the Office of
Representative Luke Scavuzzo
124th District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 6, 2008

*Floor Debate Begins
Insure Missouri Program*

As the Second Session heads into its 4th week, bills are starting to come out of committees and going to the House Floor for debate.

Most of the bills coming to the Floor are supplemental appropriation bills. These are bills that appropriate money for items that were not included in last years budget for one reason or another.

One of those bills, House Bill 2019, will appropriate funds for the University of Missouri to build a new Ellis Fischel Cancer Center on the Columbia campus. Also, it would fund the construction of the pharmacy and nursing buildings on the Kansas City campus. These projects were left out of the budget last year as punishment to a couple of Senators from Kansas City and Columbia for being against the sale of the MoHELA assets, which is where the money for these projects and others on public college campuses would come from. I am glad to see that these projects will now move forward, because they are desperately needed.

Another issue that has started to get a lot of attention is the governor's Insure Missouri plan. Insure Missouri is a new program intended to offer working adults Medicaid Managed Care coverage with more limited benefits than traditional Medicaid, now called MoHealth Net. This new program is divided into three phases:

Phase I, slated to start March 1, 2008, will cover working parents and other caretakers relatives age 19 and above with earned income below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) which is \$13,690 for a family of two.

Phase II, to begin in the summer of 2008, will cover all working adults, both those who are parents and those who are childless, with incomes up to 185% of the FPL which is \$25,327 for a family of two.

Phase III, to start in January, 2009, will cover employees of small business up to income levels set by the General Assembly.

Insure Missouri has many pitfalls from creating inequities in physician payments that may make it harder to find a physician who will accept Medicaid reimbursements to co-

pay requirements that will cause lower income families to forgo preventive and primary care, does not require coverage for physical therapy, speech therapy or occupational therapy, no dental or vision coverage either. But the biggest pitfall is that Insure Missouri does not include the elderly, disabled or children and it does not restore the cuts to Medicaid eligibility or services enacted in 2005.

Medical doctors and Republican State Representative Rob Schaaf of St. Joseph speak freely against Insure Missouri. Representative Schaaf states that while a working person at 99% FPL will receive free health care, a person with a disability with an unearned income will receive no health care at all unless they pay 15% of their income to receive it. Paying 15% of an income would be a stark contradiction to the department's statement that "no person should spend more than 5% of their income on health insurance" according to Schaaf.

We must come up with a better plan for uninsured Missourians, one that includes the elderly, disabled and children of our state. One that includes coverage comparable to that offered to state employees and one that restores the Medicaid cuts of 2005. Insure Missouri offers promise, but comes with pitfalls that could be alleviated by legislative action.

If you have concerns or need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me. My contact information is: **Representative Luke Scavuzzo, State Capitol, Room 105G, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101; phone: 573-751-4072 and my e-mail address is: luke.scavuzzo@house.mo.gov.**