Sample Opinion Submission
Rural Hospital Voice – Medicaid Expansion

On Tuesday, Aug. 4, Missourians will cast their ballots to determine whether the state should expand Medicaid. This measure is important to rural Missourians, and the hospitals and health care system that provides them care.

Many rural Missourians fall through the cracks of the health insurance system. That may be because they don’t receive health benefits through their job, make too little to qualify for or afford insurance in the marketplace, or are not old enough to be eligible for Medicare. Medicaid expansion could offer coverage to many of these hardworking rural Missourians.

Our rural hospitals and health care system would benefit as well. Many rural hospitals operate at a loss, and 10 rural hospitals have closed since 2014. Our rural communities need access to hospital care and the clinic system supported by rural hospitals. Medicaid expansion would reduce the cost of uncompensated care for the uninsured, while allowing these individuals to receive the care they need to improve their health. It’s a win-win for rural Missourians and their health care providers.

Missouri is one of only 13 states that have not expanded Medicaid. Taxpayers already are paying for expansion; we’re just not getting the benefits. We can change that.

At the same time, we can strengthen our rural economy. Hospitals and health care providers are the basis for a strong economic foundation for the communities they serve. That’s why the Missouri Chamber of Commerce consistently has supported Medicaid expansion. It provides an economic boost, while keeping Missourians healthy and in the workforce.

On Aug. 4, Missourians will have an opportunity to improve the health of their neighbors, their health care system and their community. That’s the benefit of a “yes” vote on Amendment 2.