



Other Viewpoints

Most economical: expand Medicaid

Gov. Sam Brownback hasn't expanded Medicaid eligibility because he says he is concerned about the cost. But two new reports by the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured show how costly it is not to expand – especially for Kansans who need health insurance.

One report estimates that expanding Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act would reduce the number of uninsured Kansans by almost half, or 47.6 percent. That's about 144,000 additional Kansans who could be receiving health insurance.

The report also notes that if Kansas doesn't expand, it will lose out on about \$5.3 billion in additional Medicaid funding over the next decade, which could significantly boost the state's economy. At the same time, hospitals in Kansas will receive about \$2.3 billion less in state and federal Medicaid payments, because Affordable Care reduces payments to hospitals that serve low-income uninsured patients (in expectation that many of these patients would be joining Medicaid).

The other Kaiser report notes that about 58,000 uninsured Kansans will fall into a "coverage gap" starting Jan. 1. These are people, the Kansas Health Institute News Service reported, who are too poor to qualify for tax credits to buy private insurance but not poor enough to qualify for the state's current Medicaid program.

So far, 23 states have approved the Medicaid expansion, while 21, including Kansas, are not expanding and six states are still debating the issue. Kaiser notes the states that haven't expanded Medicaid would benefit the most, because they have a higher percentage of uninsured citizens who would be covered by Medicaid.

One reason the expansion would have a bigger benefit for Kansas than many other states is because Kansas has among the stingiest Medicaid eligibility criteria in the nation. Currently, only adults who have children and earn less than 32 percent of the federal poverty level (\$5,900 for a family of four) are eligible.

Expanding Medicaid would also save the state money by moving some adults the state now cares for, such as those with mental illnesses, onto Medicaid and by reducing other costs. A study earlier this year by the Kansas Hospital Association calculated a net savings of \$82 million from 2014 to 2020.

Several GOP governors have recognized the clear benefits of expanding Medicaid. One is Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer, who has been a fierce critic of Obamacare. Her explanation of why she backed expansion is something that Brownback and state lawmakers should ponder and heed.

"It's pro-life, it's saving lives, it is creating jobs, it is saving hospitals," Brewer said. "I don't know how you can get any more conservative than that."

— *The Wichita Eagle, via the Associated Press*

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Park additions increased beauty, comfort

The Fike Park history is taken from research done by Opal Linville at the Prairie Museum of Art and History.

After the successful opening of Fike Park on July 4, 1933, progress in the park continued. The women's clubs continued to develop plots where they planted flowers and cared for them and other organizations bought benches and planted more grass.

In April of 1934, Clyde Young built a big double fireplace. The Campfire Girls sponsored this project. The girls faced the fireplace with fire brick left over from their club house. (I found no record of where that clubhouse was.)

A big circular stone bench was built in the southeast corner of the park. It had a fish pond in the center of it with a fountain. The fountain had lights that the water from the fountain flowed over making a beautiful, relaxing sight for those who just wanted to sit a while on the bench and relax. A June 20, 1934, *Colby Free Press Tribune* article announced that a screened-in dining room had been built near the Campfire Girl's fireplace. It also mentioned that the Colby School band was giving a concert every Wednesday evening in the park.

I remember that screened-in dining room. I attended many activities in that building. We had baby showers, bridal showers, family reunions, and birthday parties there. It was one place where you could serve food without the flies and mosquitos swarming the food before you could get to it. I would love to see another



Marj Brown

• Marj's Snippets

building just like that one. I think it also had a gas stove in it.

The paper also mentioned that on Sunday evenings in June, July and August the local ministers took turns preaching at a church service in the park. Special musical offerings were also presented. The news article said that on the previous Sunday, "Thelma Connelly, Nellie Troutfetter and M.A. Taylor sang the song, 'Trees.' The song was said to be very appropriate and beautiful." When I first arrived in Colby in 1948, Thelma Connelly was still singing in our Methodist Church choir.

The ministers used a public address system supplied by Bray Brothers' Electric. There were never enough seats for the many people who turned out for the services. Many people remained in their cars along the sides of the roads.

On April 24, 1935, the paper announced that a new City Hall would now be a possibility since the Kansas Emergency Relief Committee's uncertainties were removed by the passage of a \$5 billion relief bill.

This was to be a 50 by 90 foot building in

the southwest corner of Fike Park very close to the driveway. It was to be constructed of soft rocks from the bluffs of the Smokey Hill River in Rawlins County.

Plans were for it to house city offices, a library and a room for the police judge on the main floor. The Business and Professional Women's Club was expected to furnish a room for their use. Space not already allotted possibly could be used for library purposes. At the rear end of the building, a 20-by-40-foot space was to house the fire trucks, with two storage rooms for light and water supplies.

The American Legion planned to furnish the basement in exchange for a free 99-year lease. Years later the Legion built their present building on W. Fourth St. The basement was to be excavated only slightly in order to have large windows that would let in plenty of light.

It was expected that the government would pay 30 percent of the cost. A \$16,000 loan at six percent interest would be acquired from the bank at a monthly payment of \$80. Mayor Shaffer said that was what the city was already paying for rent, so they wouldn't be paying any more than they already were.

The history of Fike Park will continue in my next column. Please look for it.

Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. She says it's one of her favorite things to do.

American politics full of human failures

What do Anthony Weiner, Bob Filner, Eliot Spitzer, Thomas Jefferson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Bobby Kennedy and Bill Clinton all have in common? Think about it. It's not a political party answer. Obviously we can easily swing right and throw out names like Mark Sanford, Newt Gingrich, Larry Craig, Mark Foley and David Petraeus. There are several answers to this question. One answer – they all had or have a human failure problem.

Thomas Jefferson is reported to have had six children with a mistress slave. How would that play out on cable news today? Ralph Abernathy reported in his book that King had a problem with white prostitutes and that a mistress was in the motel the night he was killed in Memphis.

John F. Kennedy was reported to have had several affairs including one with Marilyn Monroe. His brother Bobby was also alleged to have been involved with Monroe. Roosevelt was accused of having numerous women in his life including a twenty-year affair with his secretary. And then there was Bill Clinton.

Jimmy Carter drew national attention when he admitted to being an adulterer during his presidential campaign. He said he had committed adultery many times. He referred to what Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-28: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'"

I suppose a new translation of the Bible someday may say if a person has lusted after another person. It could work both ways. Carter was further criticized because he gave this interview to *Playboy* magazine. I think there is a difference between thinking something and

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• Glenn Mollette American Issues

actually doing it – but according to Jesus human failure begins in the heart and this is what Carter was talking about.

Sanford admitted to an affair with an Argentinian woman. Craig pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct after being arrested by a policeman at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport for lewd conduct. Foley was accused of sending suggestive text and instant messages to male teens.

It seems as if it usually boils down to sex but not always. Richard Nixon was run out of Washington because of Watergate and Ted Kennedy almost lost his political career over the Chappaquiddick car crash that took the life of Mary Jo Kopechne. In 1922 Interior Secretary Albert B. Fall was found guilty of bribery, fined \$100,000 and sentenced to one year in prison in what is remembered as the Teapot Dome Scandal.

Human failure is rampant in politics, mainly because politicians are human beings prone to fall short. You may quickly name persons of unblemished service and there would be many but the problem with that is that you never know everything. Every human being is guilty of foul-ups, let downs and human failure. Even the Bible says all have come short. All means all of us.

People actually talk about the faults and

mistakes of others all the time. They talk about them in church prayer meetings under the guise of prayer requests. That usually happens like this: "Please pray for Brother John I understand he hasn't been making his house payment. Or pray for Jane Doe I understand she has been having an affair." The prayer request ends up being gossip with religious gunk on it. We gather in our little circles and make each other feel better as we talk about the faults of others.

Granted you or your neighbor may not be running for public office and therefore you may feel you are exempt from life scrutiny. Just remember these people are human beings with a human nature and human problems and have the ability to fall short of perfection. We all have that nature. It's not a political party nature. Today everybody is talking about Weiner and Filner. One time it was Clinton, Craig, Nixon, Foley, Gingrich. Last year it was Herman Cain.

Whew. I'm not slamming either party. This is not about right, left or moderate.

Professional help is available and it's not restricted to a political party.

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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

