



## MISSOURI SENATE

SCOTT SIFTON

DISTRICT 1

February 11, 2019

Hon. Todd Richardson  
Director, MoHealthNet Division  
Missouri Department of Social Services  
P.O. Box 6500  
615 Howerton Court  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

*Re: Medicaid eligibility*

Dear Director Richardson:

I write regarding the very significant recent decrease in the number of individuals qualifying for Medicaid in Missouri. I would love to believe the removal of approximately 71,000 people – roughly 57,000 of them children – from Medicaid eligibility over the last year merely reflects improved economic conditions as the State's budget director indicated.

Yesterday the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* quoted Legal Services of Eastern Missouri as indicating Missouri's drop in Medicaid eligibility over 2018 was nine times the national average. If that statistic is even close to being accurate, it is extremely difficult to believe economic factors alone accounted for the change in enrollment levels. Indeed, it is hard to understand that a 0.6% drop in unemployment over the last year would correlate with a nearly 7% drop in the number of people eligible for Medicaid. Said another way, 17,000 people getting jobs seems unlikely to account for 71,000 people losing Medicaid.

Rather than jumping to conclusions about the propriety of the drop in Medicaid enrollment, the purpose of this letter is simply to ask questions. Here they are:

1. How many of the ~977,000 enrolled as of January 2018 were sent letters?
2. Of the roughly 71,000 dropped, how many were dropped simply because they failed to respond to a letter sent to them by the State?
3. How many letters were returned as undeliverable and resulted in the intended recipient losing coverage?
4. What efforts were made, if any, to contact enrollees whose letters were undeliverable?
5. If, as was indicated in the *Post-Dispatch*, the Division does not know how many letters were sent or how many responded, who would have or be able to ascertain that information?

6. How many were dropped because they reported an income level that was inconsistent with continued eligibility?
7. Could you please provide me with an example of the letter sent? I would like to know what information those who received the letter needed to provide within 10 days of when they received the letter.
8. How many were removed from the rolls despite responding after the 10-day response period allotted them by the State with information demonstrating they were otherwise eligible?
9. I understand the State's new automated verification system was used to identify those who were potentially ineligible. What criteria did the State use to determine who might potentially need to be removed from the rolls?
10. The *Post-Dispatch* reported that "[i]n Missouri, people faced hours-long waits on the state's phone lines to get help in enrolling." Is there any other information you can provide to either corroborate or contradict the *Post-Dispatch's* claim regarding hold times?
11. How many individuals does the State employ full-time and/or part-time to staff phone lines for the purposes of assisting citizens with processing Medicaid eligibility?
12. Does the State or its service provider have a means of ascertaining hold times? If so, how long are Missourians having to wait to connect with a live person to help them with Medicaid eligibility?
13. How many Missourians have appealed or attempted to appeal their removal from Medicaid eligibility since January 1, 2018?
14. How many appeals made since that date have been granted, how many have been rejected and how many remain pending?
15. Have any cases of Medicaid eligibility fraud been identified in connection with the eligibility verification efforts in the last year?
16. Finally, if the Division is unable to answer any of the questions above, who else might have the information requested?

Thank you for taking the time to read my questions and for your attention to this matter. The work you do is tremendously important for the more than 900,000 Missourians for whom Medicaid provides the sole means of access to affordable health care.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sifton', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Scott Sifton  
State Senator, District 1