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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Title IX gives universities greater latitude to punish students accused of sexual assault

By [Brendan Meyer](#), [Ben Nadler](#)

November 28, 2012 | 6:12 p.m. CST

Suspicion about the cause of Michael Dixon Jr.'s suspension from the Missouri basketball team has risen since an MU woman accused him of sexual assault.

COLUMBIA — Michael Dixon Jr. appears to be clear of criminal charges related to a rape accusation by a fellow MU student. But recent changes in the interpretation of Title IX have prompted universities to take more aggressive action against students accused of sexual harassment or sexual assault.

The allegations against the senior guard on the Missouri basketball team first came to light on Twitter early Saturday after a woman tweeted that on Aug. 20 she was sexually assaulted by Dixon. On Tuesday, the Columbia Police Department released a report of the alleged offense, which detailed the woman's accusations against Dixon. The Boone County Prosecutor's office decided there wasn't enough evidence to make a case against him.

Dixon, 21, was suspended indefinitely on Oct. 26 after coach Frank Haith announced that he had violated team policy. Haith said it was not a legal matter that was keeping Dixon on the bench.

But Dixon's continued suspension from the team has given rise to speculation that his conduct is being reviewed by the university.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act prohibits the university from disclosing whether Dixon's conduct is being reviewed by the student conduct board, according to Mary Jo Banken, executive director of MU News Bureau.

Noel English, director of MU's Equity Office, said Wednesday that she could not comment directly on a specific student case. But she said university officials did not have the same burden of proof to find guilt as in a criminal prosecution, which requires proof beyond a

reasonable doubt. A student conduct board would only have to find that it is more likely than not that a sexual assault occurred in order to take action against a student.

English oversees Title IX issues on campus. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on college campuses based on gender. Title IX has been interpreted to include sexual harassment and sexual assault, which English said are considered forms of discrimination because they interfere with a student's learning environment.

English said that in the past, students at other universities have alleged they have been raped and seen little action against the perpetrators by university authorities.

"After a number of those kinds of complaints, the Department of Education said, 'you know what, (the student conduct board) is not a criminal court, and your job is not to look at this as a criminal event,'" English said. "Your job is to look at this as sexual harassment."

On April 4, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights released a letter of guidance to universities which stipulated the obligations that educational institutions should meet when taking disciplinary action against students accused of sexual assault.

The letter reads, "Police investigation may be useful for fact-gathering; but because the standards for criminal investigations are different, police investigations or reports are not determinative of whether sexual harassment or violence violates Title IX."

It continues: "Conduct may constitute unlawful sexual harassment under Title IX even if the police do not have sufficient evidence of a criminal violation. In addition, a criminal investigation into allegations of sexual violence does not relieve the school of its duty under Title IX to resolve complaints promptly and equitably."

The woman who accused Dixon worried from the beginning that she wouldn't be taken seriously, partly because of Dixon's status on campus where he is "worshipped," according to an investigative report released by Columbia Police on Tuesday.

The woman, who is a sophomore at MU, told police she contacted her sisters in Chicago to ask them for their definition of rape. Both of her sisters told her they thought she'd been raped and worried it could happen again, though it's not clear from the report whether they worried for her or for other women with whom Dixon might have contact.

The woman who accused Dixon contacted the Missourian newsroom on Thanksgiving Day to talk about the allegations but ultimately decided that she did not want to reveal anything that she might regret. She said she wanted to speak with her family before speaking to the media.

Telephone calls on Tuesday and Wednesday to Dixon were not returned.

The offense and investigative reports also reveal that Columbia Police never interviewed Dixon about the incident, though they equipped the woman's phone with a recording device and asked her to call Dixon from the Police Department and get him to talk about what happened that night. He never answered.

According to the investigative reports from the police, Dixon was accused of rape on Aug. 20, and the investigation was closed on Nov. 16 after Boone County Assistant Prosecutor Tracy Gonzalez concluded that there was insufficient evidence to prosecute Dixon.

The reports, which were redacted to remove the woman's name, show that police contacted the woman on Aug. 20 at around 11:30 p.m., after she called police to report she'd been sexually assaulted. She told police she'd been raped by Dixon at approximately 12:15 a.m. that morning.

The woman then gave police an account of what happened. She said she had invited Dixon over to her apartment to get to know him better.

She said that when Dixon arrived, he asked her to turn off the lights because his "eyes hurt." The woman then told Dixon that she didn't feel comfortable turning off the lights, and Dixon told her to "just chill." After a short argument, she turned off the lights.

Once the lights were off, she said, she and Dixon laid down on her bed and she tried to talk to him. She said that after a short time Dixon began kissing her and she kissed him back. She said that Dixon then stopped kissing her and got on top of her. She told police that she then told Dixon that she "did not want to do this but that she just wanted to kiss him." The report clarifies that by "this" she meant sex.

She said that Dixon once again told her to "just chill out" while he began to tug at her pajama bottoms. She said that she tried to hold her pants up and told Dixon that she did not want to have sex with him.

She said in the report that she tried to push him off her with her arms. She said Dixon didn't restrain her or hold her down. The woman told police that she then told Dixon "no, you don't

even have protection, this is disgusting.” She said that Dixon then pulled a condom out of his pocket and put it on.

The woman alleged that Dixon then penetrated her with his penis, causing her pain and making it impossible for her to move. She said that Dixon then asked her to turn over so that he could penetrate her from behind, which she said she did. She said the penetration lasted about 20 minutes.

Police then asked if she ever tried to stop Dixon from having sex with her.

The woman told police that “she had just let it happen and she did not know why.” When asked if she felt any physical threat from Dixon, she said she “was not afraid of being struck or any physical contact from Dixon that might harm her other than what was happening at the moment.”

The woman states that after Dixon was finished, she put her pajama pants back on and he asked her angrily what she was doing.

She replied: “I’m putting my pants on because this was never supposed to happen in the first place.”

She said that she then went to the bathroom, and when she returned Dixon asked her to perform oral sex on him. She said that she refused and then Dixon asked her to give him a “hand job.”

The woman told police she complied until she believed he’d ejaculated. She said she didn’t know why she did so.

Dixon then got dressed and left her apartment, she told police. About two minutes after he left, she said she sent him a text message saying that they should hang out and that she was sorry for yelling at him.

During the incident the woman told police that she told Dixon that “all basketball athletes are alike, and they all like to have sex with all the girls,” the report states.

According to the report, the woman met Dixon at a fraternity party during St. Patrick’s Day weekend and danced with him. She described their relationship as “annoying” because she said Dixon would stand her up and only want to come over late at night. She believed that Dixon was trying to use her for sex, though they did not have sex until Aug. 20, she said.

The woman told police that on Aug. 28, eight days after she contacted police about the incident, she sent Dixon a text message that said she was annoyed that Dixon was not texting her back and that she knew he was ignoring her, then called him an "asshole."

According to the report, Dixon texted her back the next day. The woman provided police the cellphone text message conversation, though, she said she had deleted some of the texts. A transcription of their cellphone conversations shows that Dixon apologized, saying he hadn't been ignoring her and was just busy. She responded that she was sorry for calling him an asshole.

She then responded via text message, "I wanted to talk to you about when I last hung out with you. I just felt like you were using me. Like you didn't want to do anything else with me but have sex."

Dixon has been practicing and traveling with the team since his suspension.

Mitchell Ferman contributed to this report.

Supervising editor is Katherine Reed.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU students lobby via Twitter to get Dixon back on court

By [Ashley Crawford](#)

November 28, 2012 | 6:15 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — The Twittersphere exploded with heated comments — some of them graphic and profane — Tuesday night in reaction to the disclosure that Missouri guard Michael Dixon Jr. was accused of sexual assault in August.

But most of the tweets expressed support for getting Dixon off the bench and back on the team, regardless of the accusation against him, which did not result in criminal charges. Tweets in the last 24 hours with the hashtag [#FreeMikeDixon](#), which popped up on Twitter around Nov. 20, have focused on puzzlement about why Dixon is still suspended from the Missouri basketball team.

Dixon was accused of sexual assault on Aug. 20, but the Boone County Prosecutor's office decided Nov. 16 there was insufficient evidence to charge him. He was suspended from the team by coach Frank Haith on Oct. 26.

Missouri football player Kendial Lawrence, [@K_Lawrence4](#), tweeted: "#FreeMikeDixon!"

The Antlers, [@The_Antlers](#), tweeted: "So how much longer until Mike plays again? #FreeMikeDixon."

Mizzou Nation, [@Mizzou2SEC](#), tweeted a picture of Dixon in uniform with the phrases, "#FreeMikeDixon" and "Students should not be punished without evidence of guilt." The picture had been retweeted almost 400 times by Wednesday afternoon.

Fans also tweeted using the hashtag.

Brandon Boyd, [@brandoninstl](#), tweeted: "Unless [@MikeDixonJR](#) killed somebody, he needs to be allowed back on the team. You made your point, Coach. #FreeMikeDixon."

Dan Noellsch, [@tigerdan4](#), tweeted: "There is no reason for Mike Dixon to not be in uniform and on the court for the next game this Saturday. [#Mizzou](#) [#freeDixon](#)."

The story broke on Twitter early Saturday morning when a woman accusing Dixon tweeted: "Yes, I said it. Michael Dixon sexually assaulted me. That's why he is suspended. You all can call me names, but I know what he did."

The tweets and the woman's account have been deleted.

The woman also responded to former Missouri basketball player Kim English's tweets questioning Dixon's suspension from the basketball team.

English, [@Englishscope24](#), tweeted: "Michael has handled this situation w/ nothing but poise, class and professionalism. Would be awesome if his University would do the same," and "Thank God we have an AMAZING chancellor who I trust will make the right decision soon. And do what's right by reinstating Michael Dixon Jr."

The woman responded, "@Englishscope24 I don't care if you or anyone in the school doesn't believe me. please do not ever say he did nothing wrong. because he did."

Supervising editor is Katherine Reed.

Missouri's Dixon avoids rape charge

COLUMBIA, Mo., Nov. 28 (UPI) -- A University of Missouri basketball player was not charged with rape despite allegations to that effect made in August, police reports indicate.

Michael Dixon Jr., a senior guard for Mizzou, was cleared of criminal charges by prosecutors in the Boone County Prosecuting Attorney's office Nov. 16 after allegations of a sexual assault on Aug. 20 were made against him.

"Based on [the police] review ... it was determined that the evidence was not sufficient to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt to a jury," prosecutor Tracey Gonzalez said.

Kim English, Dixon's teammate, took to Twitter following Missouri's 81-64 loss to Louisville Friday night, saying Dixon should be allowed to return to game action. (He is still practicing and traveling with the team.)

The tweet was met with a response by a woman identifying herself as Dixon's alleged victim, reaffirming her allegation and supporting a faculty committee's decision not to reinstate Dixon yet, The Kansas City Star reported Wednesday.

Dixon himself responded on Twitter: "Our team fought hard. I wish I could b out there helping them. I'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG!"

Dixon, who also plays baseball for the Tigers, has been suspended from both sports since the allegations surfaced.



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Missouri's Michael Dixon, cleared by police, awaits ruling of school on sexual assault charge

Now we know what's keeping guard Michael Dixon in glued to the Missouri bench in street clothes.

Dixon, a would-be star for the 16th-ranked Tigers, has not suited up this season as he serves an indefinite suspension for violating team rules. Neither Missouri coach Frank Haith nor athletics director Mike Alden has stated the cause for Dixon's suspension — six games and counting — only saying that he violated team rules but did not violate NCAA rules.

The Columbia Tribute on Tuesday uncovered a police report that shows that Dixon, a senior from Kansas City, was accused of a sexual assault in the early morning hours of Aug. 20 at the off-campus apartment of a female university student.

Police investigated the complaint — interviewing both Dixon and the unnamed complainant, a sophomore at Missouri, multiple times — but found insufficient evidence to file charges. The case was closed on Nov. 20.

“Based on (the police) review ... it was determined that the evidence was not sufficient to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt to a jury,” Boone County prosecuting attorney Tracy Gonzalez told The Kansas City Star. “That's how all of our cases are handled, and this wasn't treated any different than any other investigation that comes through our office.

“If additional evidence were presented, we could always review (the case) in its entirety and make a charge at that point as well, which is why I can't get into specifics of the case. But it was a thorough investigation.”

Dixon still could be expelled, dismissed or suspended by the University of Missouri's Student Conduct Committee. University spokesperson Mary Jo Banken declined to comment Tuesday night. She did confirm that students have the right to appeal any decision of the committee to chancellor Brady J. Deaton.

Dez Wells, a standout basketball player at Xavier, faced a similar charge this summer at Xavier. He was cleared by the prosecutor's office but still was expelled by the school. He ultimately transferred to Maryland.

Dixon, although suspended, was allowed to travel with the team to the Bahamas last week for the Battle 4 Atlantis tournament.

In the early-morning hours Saturday -- not long after the end of the Louisville-Missouri game -- former Missouri guard Kim English took to Twitter to defend Dixon. He implied that Dixon is being held out because of a ruling of the Student Conduct Committee.

"The University of Missouri 'student board' is a joke," English wrote on Twitter on Saturday morning. "Acting and making a decision without having actual facts. University should be ashamed. ... Michael has handled this situation with nothing but poise, class and professionalism. Would be awesome if his university would do the same.

"Thank God we have an AMAZING chancellor who I trust will make the right decision soon. And do what's right by reinstating Michael Dixon Jr."



\$2.4 million funds disaster center

Researcher focuses on post-tragedy troubles.

By Janese Silvey

A University of Missouri researcher has been awarded funding to help health care providers get a better understanding of the mental health needs of those who have survived natural disasters or acts of terrorism

Brian Houston, an assistant communication professor, received the \$2.4 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to establish a Terrorism and Disaster Center at MU.

The idea is to better flag problems that people experience in the months after disasters — when the news coverage, donations and other forms of support dry up.

"Usually, there's a honeymoon phase where the community comes together, are on the same page, supports one another and has the resources to help in recovery," Houston said. "Eventually, that time passes, and commonly what we see is a disillusionment phase. There was this outpouring of support, and now it's gone, but the work of rebuilding the community or one's house or the work of helping grieving friends and family members who were lost continues on. Often, that can be a difficult time for individuals experiencing disasters that one doesn't think about a lot."

The Terrorism and Disaster Center will work with school teachers, counselors and mental health practitioners in areas that have experienced disasters, including Joplin and New Orleans, to develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of crisis interventions. Houston envisions staff also working with St. Louis and Kansas City providers because the same strategies could be applied to victims of perpetual violence in cities.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the effects of a disaster, terrorist attack or other emergency can result in long-lasting problems such as stress and violence that could hurt family relationships and dynamics. Post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse also are common post-disaster symptoms, Houston said.

The grant is the largest the communications department has received and will provide funding to keep the center open through Sept. 30, 2016.

In Joplin, where a tornado hit in 2011, mental health needs were a high priority for immediate and long-term disaster response planning, said Vicky Mieseler, Ozark Center vice president of clinical services. Within a few months, Ozark Center began seeing spikes in domestic violence, gambling and substance use. Mieseler said her center is "thrilled" to work with MU on the grant.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Nixon prepares for health care announcement

7 hours ago • By Elizabeth Crisp ecrisp@post-dispatch.com 573-635-6178

MU MENTION P. 2

JEFFERSON CITY • Gov. Jay Nixon is sending signs that he may support a controversial expansion of Missouri's Medicaid program, a move that would put him at odds with Republican legislative leaders.

Nixon, a Democrat who recently won a second term in office, has been largely silent on the issue for months. His office publicized on Wednesday a statewide tour on which he will make "a major announcement regarding health care." It provided no specifics, but supporters of the Medicaid expansion have been asked to attend the events in St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield.

Some of those supporters — the Missouri Hospital Association and Missouri Foundation for Health — released on Wednesday a study that claims 24,000 jobs could be created in 2014 if Missouri participates in the optional expansion plan under the federal Affordable Care Act. The study estimates that 220,000 uninsured adults would be added to the state Medicaid rolls.

"We believe it's better to start by looking at the economic impact on the state," said Herb Kuhn, president and CEO of the Missouri Hospital Association. "All of the evidence here says it's a good deal for the state."

Job creation has been a priority for Nixon, who has rarely picked fights with the Legislature's GOP majority during his first four years in office and often avoided taking stands on controversial issues.

Legislative leaders also have listed job creation among their top priorities, but they have opposed expanding the Medicaid program, which primarily covers low-income individuals.

Sen. Tom Dempsey, a Republican from St. Charles who is in line to become president pro tem, said he thought an expansion of Medicaid benefits here was "highly unlikely" because of the burden it would place on the state budget.

"The problem that we have in the Legislature is there's a great hesitancy in establishing a new partnership with the federal government," he said Wednesday. "They've promised us the moon

and the sky — that we can expand Medicaid and it will be paid for and ultimately it will cost the state 10 percent long-term — but they don't have a great track record.”

Under the expansion proposal, the federal government would pay 100 percent of the costs for the first three years that states opt in. The states gradually would pay up to 10 percent of the costs of the newly covered.

That means the federal government would pay a projected \$8.2 billion through 2019 for the expansion in Missouri, while the state would pay \$332.9 million during that period and an estimated \$100 million each year after that to cover the cost of new enrollees.

“The basic conclusion is the state cannot afford it,” House Speaker Tim Jones, R-Eureka, told reporters earlier this month.

The MHA report, which was conducted by the University of Missouri School of Medicine, found that jobs created through the expansion would span different sectors: health care, food service, real estate and retail.

“This represents more employment than the state’s 10 Fortune 500 businesses,” Kuhn said. “We could significantly reduce the state’s unemployment rate.”

That growth would lead to an estimated \$856 million in state and local revenue and \$1.4 billion in federal taxes through 2020, according to the study.

Kuhn said the new revenue would help cover the additional costs the state faces.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in August that states can't be forced to expand their Medicaid programs, so lawmakers across the country are expected to debate the issue in the coming months.

Health groups here have formed the Coalition for Healthy Economic Growth to promote the expansion.

“Our hope is that with this report, they will see the economic and health benefits to accepting the new federal health care funding, so that we may avoid leaving the working poor with no options,” coalition Chair Joe Pierle said.

According to the most recent figures available, more than 881,000 Missourians are enrolled in the Medicaid program, which has varying degrees of coverage based on income. More than 60 percent are children, and 18.6 percent are people with disabilities.

The expansion proposal calls for coverage of all Americans who make below 138 percent of the federal poverty level — about \$31,800 a year for a family of four or \$15,400 a year for a single person.

That includes childless adults who cannot participate in Missouri's current program, and increased coverage for parents. The expansion would also reduce the number of seniors and disabled Missourians who have to spend some of their income before they can receive Medicaid benefits.

A recent study from the Urban Institute shows that many of the Missouri residents who would benefit from an expansion here are male, white and younger than 44.

Ryan Barker, health policy director for the Missouri Foundation for Health, said 70 percent of the state's uninsured residents had jobs but weren't offered health insurance or made too little to afford it.

"We are talking about uninsured Missourians that are working," he said.

Barker said the foundation planned to release a poll next week that shows Missourians favor Medicaid and the expansion.

"We see overwhelming support — near the 70 percent mark for Medicaid," he said. "The majority of Missourians favor expanding Medicaid."

Missouri hospitals could lose millions of dollars if the Legislature rejects the expansion.

Federal Disproportionate Share Hospital payments that hospitals receive for treating the uninsured will be cut under the health care law on the assumption that hospitals will be able to make up the lost revenue through increased Medicaid payments.

During a call with reporters Wednesday, U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., said the expansion was necessary "to make sure rural hospitals stay open."

If Missouri doesn't decide to expand its Medicaid program this year, some health experts are leaving open the possibility for increased coverage down the road. The federal government has not set a deadline for states to decide whether they will expand.

Medicaid expansion proposal

In an optional program offered by the federal government under the Affordable Care Act, Missouri could expand eligibility for Medicaid:

- An estimated 220,000 uninsured adults would be added to the rolls
- The federal government would pay 100 percent of the costs for the first three years, or an estimated \$8.2 billion.
- Missouri gradually would pay up to 10 percent of the costs of the newly covered, or \$332.9 million during that period, and an estimated \$100 million each year after that to cover the cost of new enrollees.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Editorial: Time for Nixon, Legislature to embrace Medicaid expansion

2 hours ago • [the Editorial Board](#)

Missouri lawmakers love to talk about leveraging state dollars. When offering tax incentives to businesses, for instance, Republicans and Democrats alike claim that every state dollar increases outside investment, usually from corporations, sometimes from the federal government.

The results, the argument goes, are jobs and economic development. Usually the argument is even true.

So why doesn't the same argument apply to health care?

It should. And perhaps it will, after lawmakers in the Missouri Legislature and other state capitals read a pair of reports issued this week about the economic realities of expanding Medicaid coverage.

The first report, by the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, analyzes how implementation of the Affordable Care Act will affect state budgets across the country. The bottom line is no surprise. Adding more people to Medicaid will cost states money.

But the payoff is huge.

That's the conclusion of a second report, this one commissioned by the Missouri Hospital Association from the University of Missouri. It predicts the expansion of Medicaid in Missouri will create 24,000 jobs in the state, more than any other economic development proposal on the horizon.

The Kaiser report makes two points that every skeptical Republican who still thinks he can stop Obamacare should study.

First, the biggest cost-driver for states will not be the expansion of Medicaid eligibility to include adults making 138 percent of the federal poverty line (a paltry \$26,344 for a family of three). States' costs for Medicaid will rise mostly because of other elements of the ACA. As more Americans become aware than they must have insurance, many will realize that they qualify for Medicaid.

The Kaiser report, done in conjunction with the Urban Institute, says that even if no states increased Medicaid eligibility, states' Medicaid costs would rise a total of \$68 billion between

2013 and 2022. That's a lot of money, but it actually represents an increase of less than 1 percent, on average, of state Medicaid budgets.

Second, some states will actually see a net decrease in health care costs because the high cost of uncompensated care (people without health insurance seeking care in more expensive emergency rooms) will significantly decrease.

For lawmakers, the question is simple: Do you want get \$10 back from the federal government for every state dollar you invest?

In Missouri, for instance, Kaiser predicts state Medicaid costs under the ACA will rise by \$2.8 billion over the 10-year period, a 6 percent increase. In Illinois, state Medicaid costs will go up \$6.4 billion in the next decade.

Most of the increase will result from people who are eligible for Medicaid now, but either don't know it or haven't bothered to sign up. Under the ACA, they'll have to sign up.

Some of these increased costs will occur whether states expand Medicaid coverage to more adults or not, Kaiser predicts.

But if states like Missouri and Illinois expand Medicaid as called for in the ACA, the federal government agrees to pick up most of the costs. So for an incremental difference (\$1.5 billion over 10 years in Missouri), the Legislature will leverage an additional investment of nearly \$18 billion in federal dollars over the same period.

The Kaiser report, if lawmakers read it, resets the health care narrative in a post-Obamacare world.

Most Missouri Republicans, for instance, supported the efforts of Ameren Corp. to seek a \$450 million federal matching grant to create the next generation of nuclear power generators. The federal government announced last week that it was choosing Tennessee instead of Missouri.

But the Legislature supported the idea in Missouri because state funds would be used to leverage a similar amount of money from private investors — who no doubt would have asked the state for tax incentives to locate their new manufacturing plant in Missouri.

Those lawmakers, Democrats and Republicans alike, saw jobs, jobs, jobs, in the speculative proposal.

That's why the Missouri Hospital Association and other medical professionals are pointing to the University of Missouri study as the key document to drive the Medicaid expansion debate when the Legislature convenes in January.

Missouri lawmakers have the power to bring that investment to Missouri. In St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield and Columbia, the health care industry is one of the top drivers of the economy.

“This isn’t a political issue,” said Joe Pierle, CEO of the Missouri Primary Care Association. “The economic well-being of the state isn’t blue or red. This is the real world.”

In the real world, Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, and the Republicans who run the Legislature already would be pushing this jobs program, as they did on the much more speculative nuclear deal. As it is, Mr. Nixon has been painfully silent on the issue and many Republicans have continued to campaign against Obamacare.

It’s time they both re-entered the real world. If the governor ever intends to accomplish something truly important, now would be a good time.

The federal government is promising a 10-to-1 return on investment in health care if states kick in a fractional increase in their Medicaid budgets.

It is time to say yes, Missouri. Yes to jobs. Yes to investment. Yes to a healthier future.

Mo. medical groups pushing for Medicaid expansion

14 hours ago • Associated Press

MU MENTION P. 2

Missouri medical groups launched a campaign Wednesday to expand Medicaid coverage to thousands of working adults, citing a study estimating that the expansion largely funded by federal money could lead to 24,000 new jobs across the state.

The push to expand Missouri's Medicaid program could also get a boost from Gov. Jay Nixon, who before his re-election this month had been noncommittal about whether the state should embrace the enlarged Medicaid program called for under President Barack Obama's health care law.

Nixon is planning news conferences Thursday at Truman Medical Center in Kansas City, Barnes Jewish Center in St. Louis and Jordan Valley Community Health Center in Springfield "to make a major announcement regarding health care in Missouri." Officials representing the Missouri Hospital Association and the Missouri Primary Care Association both said Wednesday that they plan to join Nixon at the events.

The hospital and primary care associations are part of the new Coalition for Healthy Economic Growth, which announced a campaign Wednesday to try to persuade state officials to expand Medicaid eligibility by highlighting the economic benefits. A report released by the hospital group and the Missouri Foundation for Health estimated that an additional 161,000 people would enroll in Medicaid if eligibility is expanded to adults earning up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level.

The study said the increased Medicaid spending could lead to 24,000 jobs by 2014 in nursing homes, hospitals, home-health care services, doctor's and dentist's offices and nonmedical industries such as retail stores and real estate developments.

Under a Supreme Court ruling earlier this year, each state can decide whether to enact the Medicaid expansion called for under Obama's health care law. The federal government would pay the full cost of the expansion starting in 2014, but states would begin paying a 5 percent share in 2017 that would gradually increase to 10 percent by 2020.

Nixon, a Democrat, has said only that he was reviewing Missouri's options on the Medicaid expansion called for by the new federal law, though he had campaigned in 2008 on expanding Medicaid.

Republican state legislative leaders have expressed opposition to the Medicaid expansion, citing concerns about whether the state could afford to pay its share of the future costs. Shortly after the Nov. 6 election, newly nominated Senate President Pro Tem Tom Dempsey said a Medicaid expansion was highly unlikely.

"The basic conclusion is the state cannot afford it," House Speaker Tim Jones said earlier this month.

A report released earlier this week by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Urban Institute estimated that an additional 383,000 people would join Missouri's Medicaid rolls by 2022 if eligibility is expanded to the levels called for in the federal health care law. It projected the expansion would bring an additional \$17.8 billion of federal Medicaid money to Missouri from 2013 to 2022 while costing the state an additional \$1.6 billion.

But Herb Kuhn, president and CEO of the Missouri Hospital Association, said Wednesday that those figures likely were too high. The hospital group's report prepared by the University of Missouri and the Vienna, Va.-based health care consulting firm of Dobson DaVanzo and Associates estimates that a Missouri Medicaid expansion would cost the federal government \$8.2 billion and the state \$333 million between 2014 and 2020.

But the report suggests Missouri actually could make money from the Medicaid expansion, concluding that the infusion of health care spending would generate \$856 million in additional state and local taxes during that period due to the increased jobs and economic activity.

"This effort has the potential to have the greatest statewide economic impact in terms of job creation, income growth and revenue growth of any initiative ever considered by our elected officials in the past decade," said Joseph Pierle, CEO of the Missouri Primary Care Association and chairman of the Coalition for Healthy Economic Growth.

If Missouri does not expand Medicaid eligibility, hospitals could take a financial hit. The federal health care law reduces payments to hospitals for treating the uninsured on the assumption that more people will have coverage either through private insurance or Medicaid. If hospitals have more uncovered costs, they may seek to recoup money by charging more for services that are likely to be covered by private insurers, the report said.

U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill, who supports the federal health care law, said Wednesday that state lawmakers should expand the Medicaid program. Otherwise, federal taxes paid by Missourians would end up supporting Medicaid programs in other states, she said.

"I just think it's dumb to turn down this kind of resource that Missourians are paying for," McCaskill said.