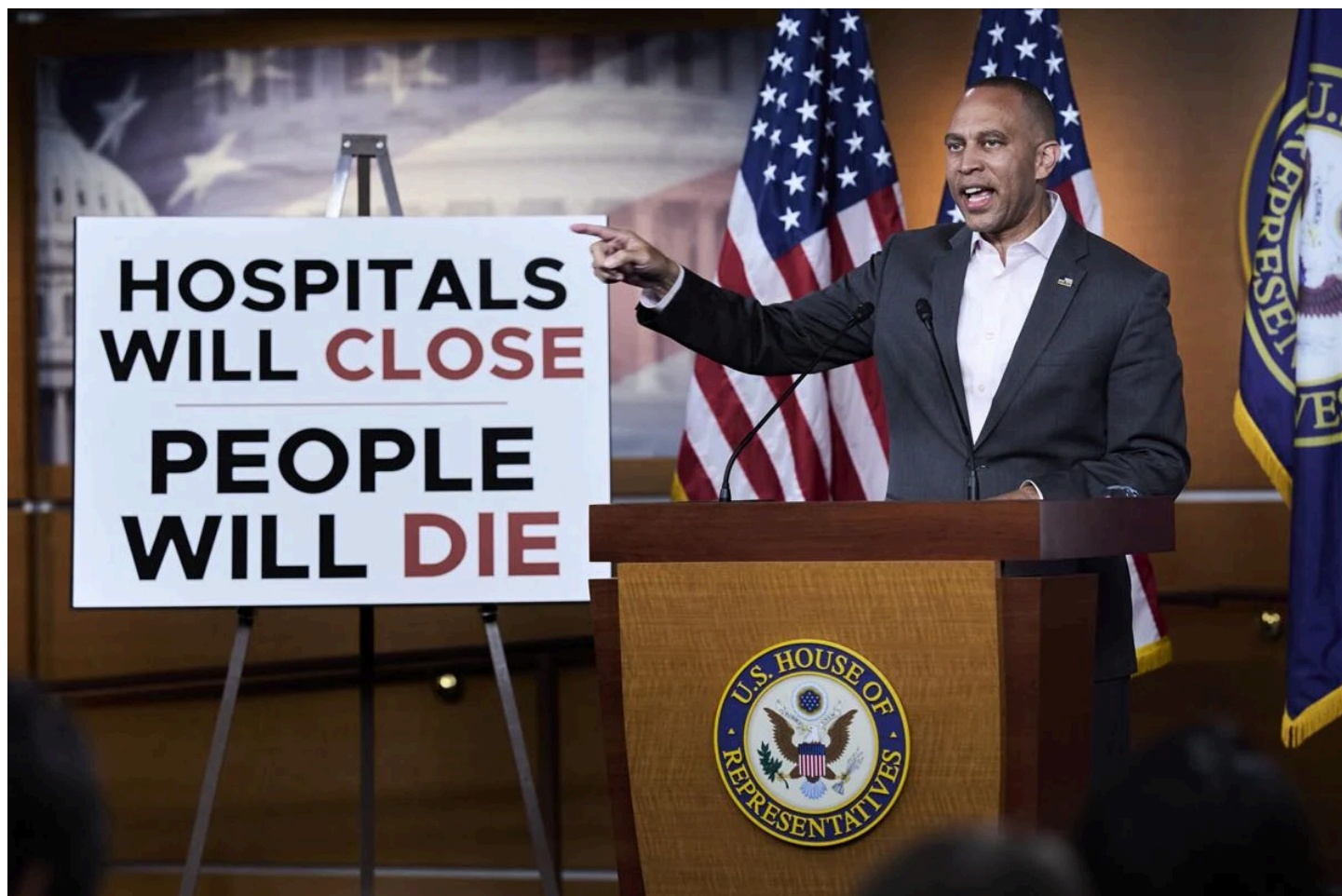


Opinion: Support your St. Louis neighbors; oppose Medicaid, SNAP cuts

Andwele Jolly

Jun 7, 2025



House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., talks about President Donald Trump's spending and tax bill Tuesday at the Capitol in Washington. J. Scott Applewhite, Associated Press

Andwele Jolly

Every day, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) in St. Louis serve hundreds of community members who rely on Medicaid, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or both. These are families — often earning \$40,000 a year or less — who turn to FQHCs because they know they'll receive high-quality health care, regardless of their ability to pay. That's the mission of FQHCs: to provide care for all, especially the most vulnerable.

Through partnerships with FQHCs such as Affinia Healthcare, Betty Jean Kerr People's Health Centers, CareSTL Health, Family Care Health Centers and St. Louis County Clinics, the St. Louis Integrated Health Network supports tens of thousands of individuals and families each

year. These centers provide primary care, dental services, behavioral health, prenatal care, and affordable medications. Many patients also rely on SNAP to feed their families — especially as food prices rise and wages fall behind.

People are also reading...

- 1 Mizzou spent more than \$31 million on NIL for athletes in the last year, records show**
 - 2 McClellan: KDHX battle ends in a loss for the hippies**
 - 3 A Cottleville family and a school turn grief into a child's legacy**
 - 4 Thousands protest across St. Louis region against Trump cuts, immigration arrests**
 - 5 AquaSculpt Reviews (Ice Water Hack) Best Diet Pills for Weight Loss in 2025**
-

Now, that care is in jeopardy.

Congress is considering more than \$700 billion in cuts to Medicaid and \$300 billion to SNAP. These devastating reductions could strip health care coverage from nearly 9 million people and eliminate food assistance for 1.5 million more, with countless others facing reduced benefits. The greatest burden will fall on low-income families and the providers who serve them.

These numbers reflect real people and real consequences.

When Medicaid is cut, patients lose coverage. Some 130,000 Missourians will likely become uninsured as a result if the Medicaid provisions recently passed by the U.S. House go into effect.

St. Louis already has a higher-than-average Medicaid coverage rate (18.8% vs. 16% statewide), meaning the region would be disproportionately affected. Preventable and chronic conditions would go untreated. Emergency rooms would become overwhelmed. Costs would rise for everyone. And FQHCs, already stretched thin, may be unable to keep up.

FQHCs in our region remain committed to their mission. But with reduced funding and rising demand, these centers may be forced to scale back services or close altogether, leaving thousands without a medical home.

This crisis is not unique to St. Louis. It's playing out across Missouri and the nation. Urban clinics, suburban practices and rural hospitals that serve as health care safety nets are all at risk.

The Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform reports that 19 of Missouri's 57 rural hospitals are at risk of closure — about one-third of all rural hospitals in the state. Eight are at immediate risk. Meanwhile, some regional FQHCs may be forced to close sites or reduce services. Without intervention, deeper cuts may follow.

The legislation proposing these cuts is advancing in Washington, but it's not final. We're encouraged by leaders like Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, who has criticized the proposal as "taxing the poor to give to the rich," and who voiced his opposition in a **New York Times** op-ed **last month**.

But one voice is not enough.

This moment is bigger than policy. It's about our shared values. Do we believe every child should have enough to eat? That everyone deserves health care when they're sick? That no matter where you live, you should have access to health services, nutritious food, affordable housing, and thriving communities?

If so, now is the time to act.

What can you do?

- Call your congressional representatives and urge them to oppose these cuts.
- Write letters to the editor to raise awareness in your community.
- Attend town halls and ask your elected officials where they stand.
- Support advocacy organizations defending Medicaid and SNAP.

We also call on civic leaders — school boards, city councils, and state officials — to pass formal resolutions opposing these cuts.

Together, we can send a clear and powerful message: We will not abandon our most marginalized and vulnerable neighbors.

Jolly is president and CEO of the St. Louis Integrated Health Network.