

Medicaid expansion adds up

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Gov. John Kasich's proposed budget is certainly a mixed bag of innovative ideas to help move Ohio forward and proposals that simply miss the mark badly.

But the component that the governor is catching the most heat over from his own party — Medicaid expansion — simply makes sense and will eventually help improve the lives of more than at least 300,000 Ohioans, and likely many more.

We applaud the governor for not getting hung up on the politics of the proposal as many of his fellow Republicans have done.

The argument against the expansion is that it endorses the Affordable Care Act.

It doesn't.

The expansion simply operates under the current system — regardless of how we feel about "Obamacare" as individuals — to provide coverage for hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged citizens who are slipping through the cracks right now.

Another contention is that the federal government won't be able to fulfill its obligations to pay the entire cost of the expansion for the first three years and 90 percent of it after that.

No one knows what the future holds but the program will move forward whether Ohio participates or not.

The expansion will likely save the state more than \$1 billion a year in care for the uninsured and use the federal funding to create thousands of health care jobs.

It simply makes sense to expand the program that will benefit so many.

This doesn't mean that Medicaid couldn't benefit from some reforms but refusing to participate in the expansion would be like the old cliché of cutting off your nose to spite your face.

The legislature needs to scrutinize many things in Kasich's budget including the new taxes that will be implemented on thousands of Ohio businesses and the fact that the public school funding formula still doesn't work.

But Medicaid expansion is one area where the governor got it right.

<http://www.irontribune.com/2013/02/24/medicaid-expansion-adds-up/>