



Republican Leaders More 'Open' to Medicaid Expansion

By: Blake - Farmer March 7, 2013

House Speaker Beth Harwell and Majority Leader Gerald McCormick say they have an open mind about expanding Medicaid. Photo credit Blake Farmer/WPLN

Previous naysayers are coming around to the idea of expanding TennCare. Even while criticizing the Affordable Care Act, they say pulling more poor people into the state's Medicaid program could have some upsides.

Other Republican-led states have taken the leap, even as Governor Bill Haslam continues to weigh the pros and cons.

House Majority Leader Gerald McCormick says at first, all he could see was that after three years, the state would have to start picking up part of the tab.

"There are some other facts that have come to light since then that would offset some of those expenses. That's why I have an open mind about it."

The survival of some hospitals may also be at risk without having more insured people who can pay their bills.

McCormick says he believes other lawmakers share his open mind. However, several do not and are still trying to block the state from expanding Medicaid before the governor makes his recommendation.

Next week, the General Assembly's health committees will hear arguments for and against expanding TennCare from Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the libertarian Cato Institute.