

Capretta, Wohlgemuth: Federal grant funding is key to Medicaid reform in Texas - Houston Chronicle

For long-term care, the state could enlist the support of enrollees and applicants in a cost-discipline effort. The first step would be to determine the amount of assistance for long-term care services relative to the level of an applicant's disability and financial needs. The most severely disabled applicants with the lowest level of resources should get enough assistance to cover the services they need. Applicants with less severe levels of disability or with more personal financial resources would get assistance commensurate with their circumstances

Whatever the amount of the monthly allotment, the enrollee would retain full control of it. The state would certify and oversee the service providers eligible to receive payments from the patient allotments, but Medicaid patients themselves would make the decisions about which service providers to employ.

By making program enrollees cost-conscious participants in their care, and by transitioning from a "defined benefits" model to a "defined contribution model," Texas can ensure the long-term sustainability of its Medicaid program and improve health outcomes for those who currently rely on it for coverage. Fundamental Medicaid reform is the right path forward for Texas.

Capretta is a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center and a visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. Wohlgemuth is executive director and director for the nonprofit Texas Public Policy Foundation's Center for Health Care Policy.

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By James C. Capretta, and Arlene Wohlgemuth

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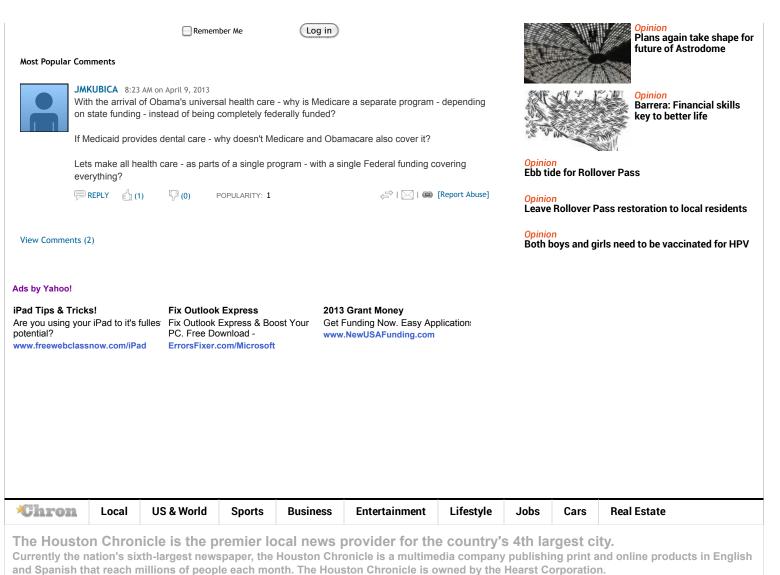


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