

MEDICAID MUSTS

September 24, 2006 -- The recommendations made by Tarren Bragdon ("Medicaid Misses," PostOpinion, Sept. 19) actually fall shy of what will improve New York's healthcare system and contain costs.

While expanding insurance coverage is crucial, it is only half of the picture. We also must ensure that the delivery system is appropriately sized, structured and financed.

For the primary-care sector, the front end of the health system, this means eliminating unnecessary emergency-room visits that cost billions, increasing access to primary care services, reducing costs and improving quality.

This is good for the people and good for Medicaid's bottom line.

Without supporting primary care, New Yorkers may have coverage but no health care home, leaving them to make expensive emergency-room visits for even routine care. Conversely, a delivery system cannot sustain itself if patients lack coverage.

These issues must go hand-in-hand.

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