

1/19/2007

Is it truly mission accomplished?

at Medicaid is the root cause
Monroe County, even though
2007 county budget is \$30
04. This mantra of political
en at odds with what fiscal

ll along—the real
is our lackluster

ute that the prob-
t incompetent fis-
is that we send too
pay for Medicaid.
problem by sending
edicaid? According
budget, that is just
ng to do.

paid the actual cost
e services provided,
he state significant-
gram and “capped”
es have to pay. Under the cap,
y’s costs is limited to 3 percent
costs. Regardless of the costs
case in the county’s Medicaid
of the 2005 base costs. The
ld go down if cuts were made,
s improved and fewer people
not exceed the cap.

surprise session of the county
he county sends the state for
correlation to the cost of ser-
becomes simply a percentage
venue. Forever into the future,
2.25 percent of its total sales
or Medicaid. The more sales
cts, the more it will send to
osts of services provided. We
om any cost-cutting made to
savings by reducing the num-
aid rolls.

y submit any legislation she
ility of the Legislature to de-
le. In the case of the intercept
have known better. Last De-

ember, the legislature adopted the county’s 2007 budget,
which estimated a 2.97 percent growth in sales tax collec-
tions in 2007. Under the Republicans’ recently enacted in-
tercept plan, if sales tax growth exceeds 2.5 percent (which
is less than inflation), taxpayers will send more money to
Albany than they would without the intercept. This means
that according to the county executive’s own budget num-

bers, if the intercept had been in effect for 2007,
we would have sent nearly \$1.5 million more to
the state for Medicaid than we have under the cap.
Again, how could sending more money to Albany
help solve our Medicaid problem?



GUEST OPINION

I’ve been involved with local politics since the
1970s and have been a CPA since before that.
One thing my experience has taught me is that
when political rhetoric trumps the numbers, we
are all in trouble. By tying our Medicaid bill to
our sales tax growth, we are banking on stag-
nant economic growth as a matter of policy. The
Republicans’ bearish approach portends a bleak
economic future for Monroe County. I can’t imag-
ine how that kind of pessimistic attitude, coupled

with lousy arithmetic, is ever going to improve anything.
When is the next flight to Charlotte, N.C.? Last one out,
please turn off the lights.

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rector of finance and current Monroe County legislator
representing the 23rd District.*