

Dialogue

Medicaid's Local Burden

We read with great interest the Pew Center on the States special report on Medicaid, "The Great Debate" [January]. While we are enthusiastic about this report, we do want to highlight an area not covered in it that also requires careful and deliberate study and documentation.

The federal and state governments have a critical partner in Medicaid—county and city governments and other government-sponsored local authorities. From a far less appropriate tax base, these governmental partners also contribute funding to sustain Medicaid as well as other essential programs.

We understand that "The Great Debate" report was focused solely on state government. However, we firmly believe that the omission of the role of local governments leads to a less than full understanding not only of the financial resources supporting Medicaid but also of the range of decision makers engaged with this area of public policy. Local governments contribute to the Medicaid program along a spectrum that moves from service delivery to finance. The system in communities is complex and the scope of functions and finance vary within states and across states.

However, this complex system works every day to serve those in need. Given this critical role, we encourage *Governing* and Pew to perhaps broaden the scope of their work, include the community perspective, and by doing so, gain a fuller understanding of the issues surrounding Medicaid.

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Pew Center on the States

Special Report on Medicaid



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