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Winner | Public Policy Timothy McBride

St. Louis Business Journal - by [Gil Stuenkel](#)

When health-care experts need an expert, chances are good they will look to Timothy McBride to help them find answers.

McBride, 47, is director of the Division of Health Policy at **Saint Louis University** and since 1994 has served as a member of the nationally recognized **Rural Policy Research Institute** (RUPRI) Health Panel, which provides information on rural health issues to Congress.

He has co-authored a book, several book chapters and numerous journal articles for health-care publications.

McBride's analyses of health policy and health economics are sought and valued by his colleagues as well as legislators. "We prize his analytical skills and broad knowledge of health issues and how they link into economics and the political spectrum," said Dr. James Kimmey, president and chief executive of the Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH). "His comments are always thoughtful and appreciated."

In the past two years, McBride has done two projects for MFH, which is the largest health-care foundation in the state and among the largest of its kind in the country. Kimmey said McBride analyzed conflicting estimates of the number of uninsured in Missouri and determined what Kimmey called "a defensible number" that the foundation could use in its policy work. McBride also led a team of experts in conducting a comprehensive analysis of Missouri Senate Bill 539 (Medicaid changes) that the foundation can use in its work with the Legislature and with advocacy organizations.

"Dr. McBride has a deep grasp of the health-care systems and has made an impact in many ways across the state," said Robert Freund Jr., chief executive of the **St. Louis Regional Health Commission**.

Joining SLU in 2003, McBride created SLU's health-policy program beginning with just two students. Thirty students are now enrolled in the program. "This is a hot field now," he said. Even with presidential and congressional elections next year, McBride said, he's optimistic that health-care reform legislation, both state and federal, may be enacted. "I'm an eternal optimist," he said. "Otherwise, it's hard to stay in this business."

He said health-care reform legislation seems to occur in roughly 20-year cycles, and the last significant legislation was enacted in 1994. "About every 20 years, we get agitated and do something. It may be a little soon now," McBride said, "but there are some indicators on the consumer and business sides suggesting that something may happen."

Among those indicators, he said, are the deterioration of employer-paid health insurance and the steadily rising premiums. Some 47 million Americans already are not covered by health insurance, he said.

"We're coming to a breaking point," McBride said. He noted that health-care costs now account for 16 percent of the gross domestic product, four times the percentage of 75 years ago.

McBride's work has included an extensive study of the recently enacted Massachusetts universal coverage plan, one of the first of its kind established in the country. Among his conclusions are that Missouri (surprisingly, he said) has similar health-care demographics to Massachusetts and that the plan, or at least parts of it, may be feasible in Missouri.

The estimated annual cost of such a plan in Missouri, he said, is about \$1.4 billion to cover all the uninsured. "However," he said, "there is some offset; we are now spending \$400 million to \$500 million in that area. It just depends on whether we have the political will to pull it off."

At SLU, he teaches courses in health policy and health economics. An exciting aspect of his work, he said, is translating research into policy and bringing research to the classroom.

His current studies involve cost and access of health care in rural areas, Social Security



BRIAN CASSIDY
Timothy McBride

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reform, access to care for children with special needs and access to insurance for welfare recipients.

Trained as an economist, McBride earned his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin. He joined SLU after 12 years at the **University of Missouri-St. Louis** and four years as a research associate at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C.

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