

THE UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT  
**HEALTH MATTERS**

*on the Hill...*



**Utah Health Matters E-Newsletter: 2008 Legislative Session Edition**  
**February 11, 2008**

Greetings Health Advocates:

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**1. HB 133 Health System Reform Passes the House**

Representative Dave Clark's Health System Reform bill, HB133, passed out of the House Friday unanimously (with three absent). Rep. Clark introduced an amendment requiring the task force established by HB 133 to study the full impact of the provision (lines 105-108) that, with federal approval, would move children from CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) onto private plans subsidized by the Utah Premium Partnership. The amendment passed with strong bi-partisan support. This shows that legislators on both sides of the aisle are committed to ensuring the best interest of Utah's children.

The Utah Health Policy Project strongly supports this bill as amended and applauds Representative Clark's efforts to bring consensus around the enormous, difficult task of reforming Utah's health system.

**Related Opportunities in the Current Legislative Session**

In the Governor's and leadership's joint press conference earlier that day, Rep. Clark

spoke to his commitment to optimize current programs (Medicaid, CHIP, Utah Premium Partnership) to cover up to ½ of the state's uninsured. UHPP would like to draw attention to 3 initiatives in play in the current legislative session that would go a long way to targeting these low-income families: Speaker Curtis HB326 CHIP Open Enrollment; HB364 Promotion of Health Care Coverage (Rep. Holdaway); and HB131 Community-Based Self Sufficiency Mini-Grants (Rep. Seelig). If we are serious about going after the 'low-hanging fruit, we will support and fund these and other bills that will help families get the health care they need," says Lincoln Nehring, Medicaid/CHIP Policy Director.

To view our full release, please click [here](#).

## 2. HHS Appropriations Prioritizes the Waiting List & Dental Services Highly

Last week the Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee prioritized their budget recommendations. The committee ranked the Disabilities Waiting List (#2), Medicaid provider rate increases (#3, #4, #5, #11), and Medicaid Adult Dental (#12) high on the combined list. The higher an item is on the list, the more likely it will be funded when Executive Appropriations makes its budgeting decisions over the next couple of weeks. Executive Appropriations is not obligated to follow the subcommittee's recommendations, but traditionally they have shown deference to the subcommittees' combined priority lists. Members of leadership would like to wait until the quarterly revenue projections are released on Feb. 18 before they decide how far to fund down the list. The fate of Medicaid dental services may hang in the balance.

CHIP funding was removed from the list because the Department has sufficient funds in its base budget to cover the program for FY 2009. Further, if Speaker Curtis' HB326 CHIP Open Enrollment legislation passes, beginning in FY 2010 ongoing funds to maintain open enrollment will be allocated.

Medicaid vision services and Prader Willi were removed from the list because in consultation with Department of Health, the subcommittee passed intent language that will allow the Department to cover these services within their existing base budget.

To see the entire list [click here](#).

## 3. MHN

The minigrants ([HB131](#) by Rep. Seelig) initiative needs serious heavy lifting because it did not rank well in HHS Appropriations last week. To get involved (letters of support and visits to the Capitol), please call Judi's cell: 870-3887.

It's exciting to see all the interest in optimizing current coverage programs to cover the estimated 1/3 of the uninsured that are eligible but not enrolled (for example the floor debate on HB133 from last Friday). However, we see no reason why this interest cannot extend to HB131 and HB364. Both are practical, proven approaches to targeting the low-income uninsured, **and they can be addressed this Session.**

Rep. Chavez-Hock's [HB 428 Statewide Standards for Health Care](#) Interpreting will be out shortly. This modest initiative begins a planning process to establish statewide standards for medical interpreting. It has no cost.

## URGENT: Help Fight Anti-Immigrant Legislation

Of all the issues impacting communities of color (but really all communities), it is the long list of anti-immigrant bills that need all of our immediate attention. An omnibus bill modeled after the Oklahoma Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act of 2007, includes employee verification, in-state tuition, cross-deputization, denial of state, local and federal benefit. Talking points against the bill:

- a. SB 81 is loaded with punitive policies that will affect negatively many US citizens based on their race and ethnicity.
- b. Recent experience with the Deficit Reduction Act and its onerous citizenship documentation requirement shows that such initiatives end up missing the intended target, harming otherwise eligible citizens. By denying otherwise eligible citizens services SB81 will add to the already unmanageable costs of uncompensated care.
- c. Similar legislation that has been enacted in other states and local municipalities are facing lawsuits for civil rights violations—not to mention the cost.
- d. The way to deal with serious immigration issues is not this way, but through SB97 by Senator Jenkins: the creation of a taskforce. This study allows legislators to act in a more objective and better educated way when dealing with immigration.

**Please call and visit with senators to voice your opposition to this hateful and needless bill. UHPP: Huge fiscal note alone should kill it, but no dice. Need all hands on deck to fight this one.**

### 4. [UHPP Health Bill Tracker](#)

[UHPP's Health Bill Tracker](#) consolidates information on important health bills being considered this session. Clicker [here](#) to see the tracker.

### 5. **The Week Ahead**

#### **Monday, February 10:**

The Executive Appropriations Committee begins meeting this week. On **Monday (4-6pm, room C445)** the Health and Human Services Appropriations subcommittee submits their committee report and budget priority recommendation. Now is the time to meet 1-on-1 with members of this committee (legislative leadership) to urge them to honor the combined prioritized list, including the Medicaid dental services and full funding for the disability waiting list, and to make every effort to fund HB364 (Rep. Holdaway) and HB131 (Rep. Seelig's minigrants pilot initiative).

#### **Wednesday, February 12:**

Medicaid Policy Partnership meets from 1pm to 1:45 in Room 210. We will discuss the status of the Partners' priorities in Executive Appropriations and Health legislation of importance to our members and strategize.

### 6. [2008 Legislative Calendar for Health Advocates](#)

Keep track of events happening on the Capitol session. The Calendar for Health Advocates has dates, time, and information

## 7. [UHPP Health Action Center—All the Tool You Need to Stay Informed this Session](#)

The [UHPP Health Advocate Toolkit](#) provides tools and information to keep you informed this session.

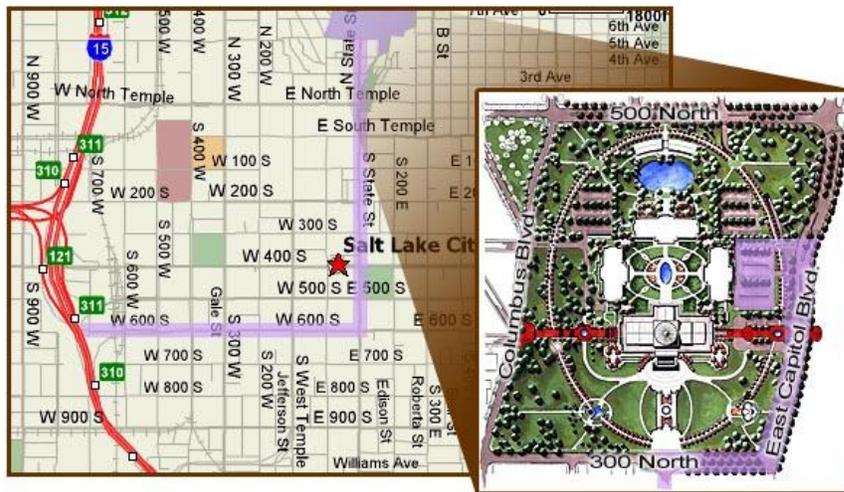
### [Call Your Legislator Cheat Sheet:](#)

Click [here](#) to download a fun to use 'cheat sheet' of important phone numbers to use during the legislative session, including the toll free numbers.

### [Getting to the Utah State Capitol](#)

If you are downtown, the Bus is a great option to get up to the Hill. Route 500 will take you right to the East Building's front door! The Capitol is in the Downtown Free Zone (!) and buses run every 15 minutes. [You can find a schedule \(with pickup locations\) here.](#)

Driving from outside of Salt Lake: simply take I-15 (either north or south) to the 600 South exit and head east on 600 South. Turn left on State Street and head up the hill to the State Capitol. See map and follow route highlighted in purple. Be sure to allow plenty of time to drive from the freeway through the city. Because Salt Lake City is experiencing unprecedented construction activity, you may experience traffic delays in your travels.



### [Where to park?](#)

Parking at the Capitol should be somewhat improved this session. There are two parking lots available to the public. The largest is on the NE Corner of the Capitol Complex. The second lot is right next to East Building (Now also know as the Senate Building). In addition, the 450 construction workers that have been at the Capitol the past few sessions are largely gone. Thus there should much more street parking available to the public this year. If you must drive, your best bet is to carpool and arrive early.

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