

THE UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT
HEALTH MATTERS

on the Hill...



Utah Health Matters E-Newsletter: 2008 Legislative Session Edition
February 16, 2008

Greetings Health Advocates!

In this issue.

1. [Announcing... New Slate of Board Officers and Additional Board Members/Celebrating the Legacy of UHPP Founder Joseph Q. Jarvis, MD MSPH](#)
2. [HB364, "Promotion of Health Coverage," Will be heard Monday Feb. 18 8:00 AM!](#)
3. [HB 133 Health System Reform Passes Senate Committee Unanimously](#)
4. [HHS Appropriations: Dental Services, Other Items in BIG TROUBLE](#)
5. [Multicultural Health Bills](#)
6. [Patient Protection Laws: Two Bills Aim to Permit Exemptions](#)
7. [UHPP Health Bill Tracker](#)
8. [The Week Ahead](#)
9. [2008 Legislative Calendar for Health Advocates](#)
10. [UHPP Health Action Center—All the Tools You Need to Advocate Effectively](#)

1. **Announcing...New Slate of Board Officers + 2 New Board Members/Celebrating the Legacy of Founder & Outgoing Board Chair Joseph Q. Jarvis, MD MSPH**

Please join us in welcoming UHPP's new slate of Board officers for 2008-09:

Board Chair: [Linn J. Baker](#)

Vice Chair: [Fraser Nelson](#)

Secretary: [Beverly Hyatt](#)

Treasurer: [Dave Rabiger, MPA CPA](#)

Policy Committee Chair: [Thomas Metcalf, MD](#)

Development Committee Chair: [Jessica Mathewson](#)

Linn J. Baker was the Executive Director of the State of Utah's Public Employees Health Program for 31 years. He was instrumental in developing the State's self-administered Health, Dental, Life, and Long-Term Disability programs. These programs are offered to state, school district, college and local government employees. He implemented a statewide preferred provider network for public employees in 1985 and organized two self funded HMO networks offered to public employees in 1991. Mr. Baker has worked closely with the State Health Department in developing "Healthy Utah", a health promotion program for employees who

adopt healthier lifestyles. He is one of the founders and two time past president of the National State and Local Government Benefits Association. He served on the National Advisory Committee for State Data Commissions, and on the Executive Committee of the National Academy of State Health Policy. "As Utah's health reform process evolves, it is essential that the Utah Health Policy Project continue to provide credible research on quality improvement, cost containment, and expanded access as well as a voice for those that are unable to access quality, affordable healthcare."

Fraser Nelson became involved with the crucial issues addressed by the UHPP during her 10 years as Executive Director of the Disability Law Center. "People with disabilities, like so many Utahns, are too often left without the health care services they need, including mental health care. Now as a consultant for nonprofits, Nelson sees the struggle small businesses owners—including the nonprofit sector—face trying to keep health insurance benefits for their employees. "Health system reform is imperative. It impacts the economic health of the state and the well being of each of our citizens. UHPP is a catalyst for that reform."

Beverly Hyatt is a Registered Dietitian and has a Masters degree in Public Health from the University of Utah where she is working on her PhD in Health Education. She works as Director of the Health Promotion Bureau for the Salt Lake Valley Health Department, and she teaches health and nutrition classes for the University of Phoenix. Beverly served a term as President of the Utah Public Health Association, and is now on the board of directors of the Utah Nutrition Council. She has been active in community volunteer initiatives for the Food Bank and the Inner City Project, and currently helps coordinate activities at an Assisted Living Center.

Dave Rabiger (MPA CPA) graduated from the University of Utah with a BA in Accounting and a Master of Public Administration from BYU. In 1976 he started his professional career with the international accounting firm of Peat Marwick and qualified as a Certified Public Accountant. He subsequently worked for five years with Intermountain Health Care as an internal auditor performing financial and operational audits for Intermountain hospitals and clinics. He left Intermountain and worked as Director of Finance for Tempe St. Lukes Hospital in Tempe Arizona for two years. For the past 23 years, Dave has been employed with the Utah Department of Health where he is currently the Budget Manager. Dave has also been active with Utah Public Health Association where he has been serving as Chairman of the Audit Committee.

Jessica Mathewson is a marketing strategist and Certified Professional Facilitator with over 20 years of experience with Fortune 500 companies. Experiencing first-hand the impact of the current health care system on family and friends, she is committed to supporting UHPP and its goals of improved quality and fair access.

Thomas Metcalf, MD, is a general pediatrician in Salt Lake City, working part-time in the office and part-time in child advocacy. He has served on a number of task forces, boards, and projects, at national and state levels, to advance child safety and health, working for the past 10 years toward universal health care for children and adults. He feels the current Utah effort, although very limited at present, is a first step in the right direction. Dr. Metcalf believes Utah Health Policy Project is the most influential state force in progressing toward health care for all Utahns.

UHPP is pleased to welcome the following new members to the Board of Trustees:

- Former Rep. David Ure (R) and farmer
- Former State Senator Ron Allen (D) and small business owner

They are excited to join UHPP's full Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees, Current Regular Members

- Norman Bangerter, former Governor of Utah (R)
- Mary Corporon, Corporon & Williams, LLC
- Stephen Hatch, President, Hatch Family Chocolates
- Bill Orton, former Congressman from Utah (D)
- Andrew Riggle, Disability Law Center (and Medicaid recipient)
- Luz Robles, MPA, Director, Zions Business Resource Center
- Dee Rowland, Catholic Diocese

What a fabulous team!

Please join all of us in thanking UHPP (then “Utah Health Alliance”) founder and outgoing Board Chair/President, Dr. Joseph Q. Jarvis, MD MSPH, for his leadership and unfaltering commitment to a high quality, affordable, accessible and financially sustainable health care system. Dr. Jarvis’ vision continues to guide our work and inspire all of us to ‘keep up the good fight’ until every man, woman, and child in Utah has sustainably financed, quality, comprehensive, affordable health care coverage.

2. HB364, Promotion of Health Coverage will be heard Monday Feb. 18 8:00 AM

HB364 (Rep. Kory Holdaway) improves access and utilization of UPP, CHIP & Medicaid

It is estimated that 1/3 of the uninsured in Utah qualify for state sponsored health coverage. HB364 makes it easier for hard-working individuals and families to find out about and enroll in the Utah Premium Partnership (UPP), CHIP and Medicaid to get the health coverage they need.

HB364 does four things that will help Utahns get health insurance:

1. It directs the Department of Workforces Services to work with the Department of Health, and the Utah Board of Education to develop a plan to identify CHIP and Medicaid eligible children who are enrolled in free or reduced lunch and when children submit immunization records.
2. It makes eligibility for the UPP program a life event (like having a baby, getting married, or a divorce). This will allow employees to enroll themselves and their families in an employer-sponsored health program outside the open enrollment periods.
3. It expands eligibility for adults in the UPP program to 200% of the poverty line. This creates uniformity in eligibility for the program among parents and their children, making the program easier to use and market.
4. It provides a \$200,000 marketing budget to the Department of Health to get the word

out about the UPP program. A recent survey found that 87% of Utahns have not heard about the program. Because the UPP program is likely to be a cornerstone of the broader health reform efforts underway in the state, we must make UPP more visible. HB364 is the way to do this.

3. HB 133 Health System Reform Passes Senate Committee Unanimously

On Wednesday Health System Reform took one more step forward. HB133 passed the Senate Health and Human Services Committee with unanimous support. UHPP is excited to work with the legislature and other stakeholders over the next number of years to reform the state's broken health care system. Some people have asked, "Why wait? We need reform now!" The legislature knows that successful reform must be done carefully and deliberately, and UHPP agrees. Yet there are a number of initiatives and funding requests being decided this year that do move us forward this year. The following are bills that UHPP supports:

- Speaker Curtis HB326 CHIP Open Enrollment (get our fact sheet)
- HB364 Promotion of Health Care Coverage (Rep. Holdaway); and
- [HB131 Community-Based Self Sufficiency Mini-Grants \(Rep. Seelig\).](#)

4. HHS Appropriations: Medicaid Dental Services, Other Items in BIG TROUBLE

Next week the state will announce new budget projections. These projections will largely dictate how far down the HHS [priority list](#) can be funded. Unfortunately, all indications are that the state revenue picture will be dismal. Departments are currently being asked by the Governor to provide what their "must fund" items are. Now is the time to make sure Executive Appropriation Committee Members understand why programs like Medicaid dental services and the disability waiting list are important.

Executive Appropriations Committee Members are listed below. Please call EACH and ask that Dental Services be funded with ongoing money.

Pre	First	Last	Dist	Home	Cell	Email
Rep	Ron	Bigelow	Dist. 32			ronbigelow@utah.gov
Rep	David	Clark	Dist. 74	435-634-5123		dclark@utah.gov
Rep	Greg	Curtis	Dist. 49	801-538-1930		gcurtis@utah.gov
Rep	Brad	King		435-613-5246		brad.king@ceu.edu
Rep	David	Litvack	Dist. 26	801-359-5211	801-792-7172	dlitvack@utah.gov
Rep	Rebecca	Lockhart	Dist. 64	801-377-7428	801-369-6784	blockhart@utah.gov
Rep	Carol Spackman	Moss	Dist. 37		801-647-8764	csmoss@utah.gov
Rep	Phil	Riesen			801-560-3055	philriesen@comcast.net
Rep	Gordon	Snow	Dist. 54	435-722-4403		gsnow@utah.gov
Sen	Curtis	Bramble	Dist. 16	801-373-1040 x30		cbramble@utahsenate.org

Sen	Gene	Davis	Dist. 3	801-263-7108		gdavis@utahsenate.org
Sen	Mike	Dmitrich	Dist. 27	435-472-4732	801-550-6128	mdmitrich@utahsenate.org
Sen	Dan	Eastman	Dist. 23			Deastman@utahsenate.org
Sen	Brent	Goodfellow	Dist. 12	801-957-3313	801-556-4871	bgoodfellow@utahsenate.org
Sen	Lyle	Hillyard	Dist. 25	435-752-2610		lhillyard@utahsenate.org
Sen	Patricia	Jones		801-322-5722		patjones@utah.gov
Sen	Sheldon	Killpack				skillpack@utahsenate.org
Sen	Peter	Knudson	Dist. 17	435-723-6366		pknudson@utahsenate.org
Sen	John	Valentine	Dist. 14	801-373-6345		Jvalentine@utahsenate.org

CALL FOR DENTAL STORIES

Also, starting this week and continuing through the end of the Session, UHPP will be dropping a Medicaid dental 'story a day' on each legislator's desk. IF YOU HAVE OR CAN GET A COMPELLING STORY OF THE NEED FOR MEDICAID ADULT DENTAL SERVICES, PLEASE EMAIL IT (WITH A DIGITAL PHOTO) to UHPP:

Stacey@healthpolicyproject.org. This approach has worked very well for us in the past. Stories that include a family budget (showing there is no \$ left over to pay for dental care out-of-pocket) or description of what happens when you delay care (it becomes more expensive or you have to go to the ER) are especially effective.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

As per tradition, UHPP now needs volunteers to man (or woman) the phones and call individuals in our database from key legislative districts. If you can spare a few hours any day of the week, please call the office: (801) 433-2299 and we will hook you up with a good list of names. This tried and true approach has been very effective in the past.

5. Multicultural Health Priorities

First the good news on our beloved minigrants ([HB131](#) by Rep. Seelig) bill: On Valentine's Day it passed the House with unanimous support (feel the love?!). Thanks so much to those of you who took the time to write letters of support—they obviously helped! **Please join us in thanking Rep. Seelig for her hard work and eloquence on the bill.** The bill's chances for funding are somewhat improved because it's been added to another bill ([HB355](#) by Rep. Ray) that raises the tobacco tax to fund preventive health activities—including coverage for the uninsured. HB355 will be heard in the House Revenue & Tax Committee next week (it has been assigned to the committee but not yet scheduled). We really need folks up on the hill. To get involved (letters of support or time on the Hill), just 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 listen to [the floor debate on HB133](#) from last Friday). Both HB131 and HB364 are practical,

proven approaches to targeting the low-income uninsured, **and they can be addressed this Session.**

Rep. Chavez-Houck’s HB 428 Statewide Standards for Health Care Interpreting will be out shortly. This much scaled-back initiative begins a planning process to establish statewide standards for medical interpreting (right now there are none). Based on our knowledge of quality standards in other states, the MHN will be very busy on this issue over the coming year!

URGENT: Help Fight Anti-Immigrant Legislation: ACTION NEEDED THIS WEEK

The Salt Lake Chamber and others, including United Way, have collaborated to launch a broad stakeholder group called the Immigration Policy Coalition (IPC). For more information send an email to agnes@uw.org.

URGENT ACTION NEEDED: SB81, the omnibus anti-immigrant bill will be heard at 11:15 AM THIS TUESDAY (“time certain,” which means it is definitely scheduled at this time). If you can give up part of Monday (President’s Day), please come up to the Capitol and help lobby against SB81. UHPP has prepared a [new fact sheet](#) for your use.

The following senators are on the target list (please have respectful conversations):

	First	Last	Home	Cell	Email
Senator	Allen	Christensen	801-782-5600		achristensen@utahsenate.org
Senator	Jon	Greiner	801-621-0423		jgreiner@utahsenate.org
Senator	Lyle	Hillyard	435-753-0043		lhillyard@utahsenate.org
Senator	Sheldon	Killpack	801-773-5486		skillpack@utahsenate.org
Senator	Peter	Knudson	435-723-2035		pknudson@utahsenate.org
Senator	Wayne	Niederhauser	801-942-3398		wniederhauser@gmail.com
Senator	Dennis	Stowell	435-477-8143	435-559-8143	
Senator	Kevin	VanTassell	435-789-0724		kvantassell@utahsenate.org
Senator	Carlene	Walker	801-733-4599		cwalker@utahsenate.org

NOTE: If not listed above, the senator is unwilling to negotiate or already on our side.

6. Patient Protection Laws: Two Bills Aim to Allow Exemptions

Two bills propose to exempt insurers from some of Utah's patient protection laws:

1. HB168, Health Insurance Market Choices (Rep. Dunnigan), which allows health insurance companies to offer products that are exempt from selected state patient protection laws. The exempted laws are specific to provider or network requirements and to the definition of "basic health care services" (i.e. inpatient hospital and physician care, outpatient medical services and out-of-area coverage). Insurers who want to take advantage of the exemptions must provide at least one product that honors the laws. (see our [new fact sheet](#))
2. HB491, Health Plan Exemption from Selected Requirements (Rep. Hutchings), which allows foreign insurers (health insurance companies from out of state), to come into Utah and provide insurance products that are exempt from *ALL* of Utah's patient protection laws. The current version of the bill limits these products to the most vulnerable Utahns, those eligible for the Utah Comprehensive Health Insurance Pool (HIP). These are uninsurable people with expensive and significant health care needs and therefore have the most to lose from any weakening of the basic patient protections that are now in place. ([new fact sheet](#))

UHPP opposes both of these bills. As we embark on health system reform in Utah there are a number of complex policy decisions that need to be made to set the stage for successful reform. During this process, patient protection laws will need to be addressed. Yet, Utah must strike a proper balance between increasing access to benefits, ensuring quality care, decreasing costs and maintaining a stable health insurance market, which can be extremely difficult. Objective information about the costs and benefits of patient protection laws is essential to achieving this delicate balance.

Two bills also being debated by the legislature set the framework to study this balance and ensure the state makes informed policy decisions, Rep. Clark's Health Reform Bill HB133 and Rep. Dunnigan's Review of Health Insurance Mandates HB60.

7. [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.

8. The Week Ahead

Wednesday, February 22:

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

9. [2008 Legislative Calendar for Health Advocates](#)

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

10. [UHPP Health Action Center—All the Tool You Need to Advocate Effectively](#)

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.

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