

THE UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT  
**HEALTH MATTERS**

*on the Hill...*



**Utah Health Matters E-Newsletter: 2008 Legislative Session Edition**  
**February 4, 2008**

Greetings Health Advocates:

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**1. HB 133 Health System Reform Clears First Hurdle, Still Needs Amending**

HB133 was heard last week in the House Business and Labor Committee. The bill passed out of committee a vote of 9-2-2. Numerous people testified in support of the bill and some voiced their concerns. UHPP testified their support of the bill as a vehicle for health system reform, but that the CHIP provision (prohibiting children who are eligible for CHIP from enrolling in the program if their parents qualify for UPP) must be moved to the study section because it is harmful to low income children and families. See our [factsheet](#).

Representative Biskupski (D, 30) presented an amendment to study the impact of the CHIP provision. The amendment failed with four votes in support of the amendment. Please take the time to thank Rep. Biskupski, Rep. Froerer, Rep. Hansen and Rep. Neuenschwander for voting in favor of ensuring that low income children and families are not harmed in the reforms.

UHPP continues to work hard on this issue and hopes to see some movement on this issue on the House floor. HB133 should be heard sometime this week on the floor. Continue to or start talking with your legislators NOW regarding this issue. For a copy of our new fact sheet on the bill click [here](#).

## **2. Sen. Christensen Passes Bill ([SB172](#)) to Restore Vision for FY2008**

Senator Christensen received unanimous support for [SB 172](#), his bill which allows the Department of Health to provide vision care for the rest of the 2008 fiscal year. Last year the legislature appropriated \$175,000 for Utah Medicaid to provide eyeglasses with a \$10 copay and utilizing a sole source provider. However, the federal government did not approve the state's plan because the co-pay exceeded the maximum allowable for this population.

Senator Christensen's SB172 allows the Department of Health to use the money allocated last session to provide vision care without a co-pay or the sole source requirement. The bill may have trouble in the House. PLEASE ENCOURAGE HOUSE MEMBERS TO SUPPORT THE BILL. For talking points click [here](#).

Please take a few minutes to thank Sen. Christensen for his leadership and patience on this critical issue.

## **3. Speaker Curtis' HB326 (Open Enrollment for CHIP) Passes Committee...**

House Speaker Greg Curtis proposal (HB326) to remove the state's ability to cap CHIP enrollment passed standing committee with unanimous support. Currently CHIP has limited enrollment, because it is based on the amount of funding allocated by the Legislature. In past years, the CHIP program has regularly been closed to new enrollees due to insufficient funding. Currently over 30,000 Utah kids receive health coverage through CHIP, however, it is estimated that an additional 70,000 children in Utah could benefit from the state's CHIP or Medicaid programs. Speaker Curtis' legislation will ensure that the cost-effective program will be available when families need it. PLEASE ENCOURAGE REPRESENTATIVES TO SUPPORT THE BILL.

## **4. Multicultural Health Legislation**

[HB131](#) Community-Based Self Sufficiency Grants (Rep. Seelig) will be presented to the Health & Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee on Monday, February 4 2:00 PM, room W125 so that it can be prioritized. There will be no opportunity for public comment at this hearing, but it is never too soon to convince members of HHS Standing Committee to support the bill. Click [here](#) for our new factsheet and talking points.

We are working closely with Rep. Chavez-Houck on a bill ([HB428](#)) to initiate a planning process to develop statewide interpreter standards and recommendations for the implementation of CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards for the provision of health care). To get involved in advocacy for this important bill, please send email to MHN: [isabel@cuutah.org](mailto:isabel@cuutah.org). This bill should be drafted soon.

## **5. Anti-Immigrant Bills Threaten Access to Health Care for Everyone**

Sen. Hickman's [SB 81](#) will be heard on MONDAY, Feb. 4 @ 8:00 AM, room W020. This legislation is an omnibus bill modeled after the Oklahoma Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act of 2007. The bill includes employee verification, in-state tuition, cross-

deputization, denial of state, local and federal benefit.

Talking points from Luz Robles against the bill:

- [SB 81](#) is loaded with punitive policies that may affect negatively many US citizens based on their race and ethnicity
- Similar legislation that has been enacted in other states and local municipalities are facing lawsuits for civil rights violations.
- We encourage you to support the creation of a taskforce to study this issue as proposed in [SB97](#) by Senator Jenkins.
- This study will allow our state legislature to act in a more objective and better educated way when dealing with immigration.

Please call and visit with [members of the Senate Government Operations and Political Subdivisions Standing Committee](#) to voice your opposition to this hateful and needless bill.

## **6. HB364 improves access to UPP CHIP & Medicaid**

HB364 Improving access to Health Coverage

HB364, sponsored by Representative Holdaway, makes several changes to Utah Premium Partnership Program UPP and how the state promotes CHIP and Medicaid to potentially eligible Utah kids.

Changes to UPP:

- HB364 makes qualification for UPP a life event. This allows individuals and families to enroll in an employer's sponsored health plan outside of open enrollment periods.
- HB364 ends confusing dual eligibility requirements for children and adults. Currently, children qualify for the program if their family is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), while adults only qualify if they earn below 150% of the FPL. HB364 would bring make the eligibility requirement 200% of FPL for everyone.
- HB364 provides the Department of Health a marketing budget so the state can better promote this important program.

Improving access to CHIP & Medicaid:

- HB364 allows the Department of Workforce Services and the Department of Health to work with Utah Schools to identify children are eligible for CHIP and Medicaid and get them the health coverage they need. Specifically the bill asks the DWS and DOH to work with the Utah School Board to identify CHIP and Medicaid eligible kids when children apply for reduced or free school lunch and when children submit their immunization records.

## **7. [UHPP Health Bill Tracker](#)**

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

## **8. [2008 Legislative Calendar for Health Advocates](#)**

Keep track of events happening at the Capitol this session. The Calendar for Health Advocates has key dates, times, and details. Please join us for the regular strategy meeting of the Utah Medicaid Policy Partnership on the Hill: When: this Wednesday from 1:00 to 1:45 PM in Room 215 at the Capitol (main building, on the south side) This is a wonderful chance to compare notes and coordinate strategy on the many Medicaid and CHIP funding issues for the session.

9. [\*\*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. Be sure to download our latest version of the Excel list of Legislators. This one shows committee assignments.

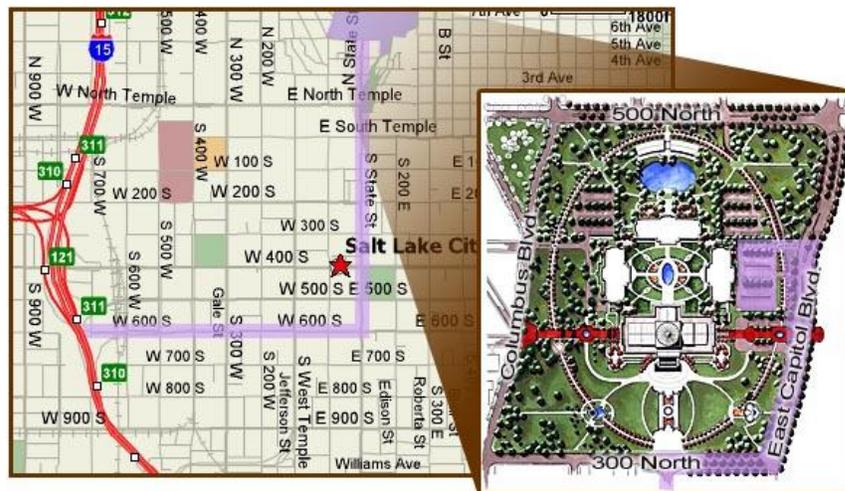
[\*\*Call Your Legislator Cheat Sheet:\*\*](#)

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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