

THE UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

HEALTH MATTERS

On the Hill...



Utah *Health Matters* E-Newsletter

February 16, 2007

Greetings Health Advocates,

Brace yourselves for the final full week of the Session, our last chance to convince leadership to address the most critical, as yet unfunded needs, including Medicaid dental and vision services and the Children's Health Insurance Program. **If there ever was a time to have physical, positive presence at the Capitol, it is now.** If you cannot make it up to the Capitol on Monday (12:30-1:00 pm) for the [Family Investment Coalition's press conference](#), then please call (801) 433-2299 or 801-870-3887 to help with phone calls to community leaders in key legislative districts.

Read on...

The week ahead...

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1. **Where we stand on Health & Human Needs...in light of new revenue projections**

The revised FY 2008 revenue projections were released on Tuesday (General Fund is up by \$49 million, of which \$24 million is true surplus). Right now, it seems as though there is a desire among House Republicans to use most, if not all, of the new ongoing surplus to increase the proposed tax cut to somewhere between \$208-245 million. Meanwhile, Senate Republicans and Governor Huntsman are standing by their commitment to a \$150 million tax cut. There also appears to be little appetite to dedicate the increase in ongoing money to long-term needs (like dental and vision services and CHIP) because of the unpredictable nature of the revenue sources. Add to that the amount still to be divvied up between roads and buildings and it becomes clear that unless the parties can reach a reasonable compromise on the amount of the tax cut, **all non-**

mandatory Health and Human Services priorities are in serious jeopardy at this time.

On Wednesday the Executive Appropriations Committee met to accept the base budget and the revenue projections and approve the intent language recommended by the sub-appropriations committees. Unfortunately, the committee did not approve the language adopted by the Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee directing any savings derived from the preferred drug list to dental and physician reimbursement rates. However, several committee members expressed support for the concept, and it appears to be a matter of finding the correct vehicle. As you speak with members of Executive Appropriations and your own legislators, please emphasize how important it is that Medicaid be allowed to re-invest the savings from the PDL and the change in the federal matching rate to restore services and improve the quality and timeliness of care.

TAKE ACTION

The following two members of House Republican leadership are critical to a favorable outcome for health and human needs:

Rep	Bigelow	Ron	R	West Valley City	84120	801	968-4188	ronbigelow@utah.gov
Rep	Clark	David	R	Santa Clara	84765	435	628-5108	dclark@infowest.com

Why them? Because both have indicated they support the restoration of dental and vision services and CHIP. But this will not be possible if the House Republican Leadership fails to negotiate with the Senate on the amount of the tax cuts.

- Medicaid vision & dental services (ranked 20 & 21)
- full CHIP funding (price tag should be \$4.17 million)
- mental health funding.

For talking points, visit http://www.healthpolicyproject.org/LegActionCenter/fact_sheets.htm

Please take a few minute to call, visit, or email members of leadership (It is fine to call them at home). *Please make every effort to meet with those marked in **bold** below.* IF YOU CALL DURING THE WORKDAY, CALL THEM AT THE HOUSE & SENATE. LEAVE A MESSAGE ON THEIR BLACKBERRY ASKING THEM TO CALL YOU BACK THAT DAY, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE (LEAVE YOUR # & BEST TIME TO REACH YOU).

House: (801) 538-1029 **Toll Free: (800) 908-4261**

Senate: (801) 538-1035 **Toll Free: (800) 613-0677**

Otherwise, call them at home (avoid Sunday & Monday evenings & not after 9:30 pm)...

Executive Appropriations (Leadership), House Members

Rep	Becker	Ralph	D	Salt Lake City	84111	801	355-8816	rbecker@bearwest.com
Rep	Bigelow	Ron	R	West Valley City	84120	801	968-4188	ronbigelow@utah.gov
Rep	Clark	David	R	Santa Clara	84765	435	628-5108	dclark@infowest.com
Speaker	Curtis	Greg J.	R	Sandy	84093	801	942-7464	repqcurtis@hotmail.com
Rep	Dee	Brad	R	Ogden	84405	801	479-5495	bldee@msn.com

Rep	Litvack	David	D	Salt Lake City	84111	801	792-7272	davidlitvack@hotmail.com
Rep	Lockhart	Rebecca	R	Provo	84606	801	377-7428	sblockhart@msn.com
Rep	Moss	Carol Spackman	D	Holladay	84117	801	272-6507	carolspackmoss@mindspring.com
Rep	Snow	Gordon E.	R	Roosevelt	84066	435	722-4162	gsnow@utah.gov

Executive Appropriations (Leadership), Senate Members

Sen	Bramble	Curtis	R	Provo	84604	801	226-3663	cbramble@utahsenate.org
Sen	Davis	Gene	D	Salt Lake City	84106	801	484-9428	gdavis@utahsenate.org
Sen	Dmitrich	Mike	D	Price	84501	435	637-0426	mdmitrich@utahsenate.org
Sen	Eastman	Dan	R	Bountiful	84010	801	295-5133	Deastman@utahsenate.org
Sen	Hillyard	Lyle	R	Logan	84341	435	753-0043	lhillyard@utahsenate.org
Sen	Jones	Patricia W.	D	Holladay	84117	801	278-7667	patjones@utah.gov
Sen	Killpack	Sheldon	R	Syracuse	84075	801	773-5486	skillpack@utahsenate.org
Sen	Knudson	Peter	R	Brigham City	84302	435	723-2035	pknudson@utahsenate.org
Sen	Mayne	Ed	D	West Valley City	84120	801	968-7756	emayne@utahsenate.org
Pres.	Valentine	John	R	Orem	84097	801	224-1693	jvalentine@utahsenate.org

NOTE: Since leadership's recommendations impact the entire state, you don't have to live in a member's district to call—though it helps if you do.

2. Health Bill Tracker for Week 6

For the latest updates on most health-related bills. Click on [Health Bill Tracker for Week 6](#).

3. FEDERAL FRONT: Next Steps for SCHIP Reauthorization

In 2007, Congress has an incredible opportunity to provide health insurance coverage to more kids. Reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) will help America's kids' health and their ability to succeed in life. However, Congress must make reauthorization a top priority and allocate enough funding to build on the remarkable success of the program.

The new Democratic-controlled Congress has brought along with it many changes to the rules under which Congress operates. In an effort to encourage fiscal responsibility in the budget process, legislators have introduced the "pay as you go" or "pay-go" rule. Simply put, the pay-go rule says if Congress wants to increase spending on entitlement programs or cut taxes, it must pay for such changes with cuts or tax increases elsewhere in the budget.

Some believe that this rule could negatively affect the reauthorization. However, pay-go does not

preclude a good CHIP reauthorization bill. Congress can find the much needed increase in funding for CHIP by closing tax loopholes or cuts in less important federal programs. So long as advocates are diligent in reminding Congress how important CHIP is to America's children and youth, funding can be found to substantially increase CHIP funding and ensure more children have the health insurance that they need.

Action Steps for this week

1. We're still looking for stories from families who have been helped by CHIP (or who have uninsured kids). Call (801) 433-2299 or send an email to lincoln@healthpolicyproject.org to share your story and help with CHIP advocacy at the state and Federal level.
2. Make your appointments with Utah's congressional delegation for the recess period. Use our [Talking Points for Federal SCHIP Re-authorization](#) if you need them and make sure Utah's congressional delegation understands how important CHIP is to our children's future. Please book your appointments for the April recess (1st week) through Reed Ryan: reed_ryan@hatch.senate.gov. Use our [Talking Points for Federal SCHIP Re-authorization](#) if you need them.

4. Family Investment Coalition Press Conference is Monday, Feb. 19 12:30 pm @ Plaza

Media Advisory: What would \$60 Million Buy?????

- ? Health Insurance for Children?
- ? A chance for at risk kids to have a fair shot at success?
- ? Affordable housing?
- ? Medicaid Dental Care and Eyeglasses?
- ? And end to the waiting, waiting, still waiting list for disability services?

Find the answer to these and other pressing questions at our press conference on Monday February 19th 12:30 pm in the Capitol Plaza (if the weather is inclement we will move to W135)

Press will have the opportunity to meet and interview individuals, families, teachers and service providers whose lives are affected everyday by state funding for health care, housing, education and disability services.

Contacts:

Sarah Wilhelm, Voices for Utah Children sarah@utahchildren.org

Heather Tritten, Utah Community Action Partnership Association heather@utahcap.org

5. Small Business Health Coverage Initiatives: What's Next?

HB152: Small Business Health Plan Task Force (Rep. Mascaro). This bill was tabled for the year, because Speaker of the House Greg Curtis does not want any task forces this year (this was news

to all of us!). Please join us in thanking Rep. Jackie Biskupski for pulling the bill. This, at least, spared us actual defeat. The need to work closely with the Governor's and his Office of Economic Development on the 2007 Small Business Health Coverage Task Force cannot be over-stated. Please email Lincoln to get involved: Lincoln@healthpolicyproject.org

SCR 6, 1st Subst. (Sen. Bell) Resolution Urging Congress to Sponsor the Health Partnership Act or Creative Federalism: is still in play. This important resolution is back on the Senate 2nd Reading Calendar. Please ask all senators to support this fine bill. The [bill](#) makes its own eloquent case for itself.

We look forward to working with all of you (and the Governor's Office of Economic Development) through the Session *and beyond* to create affordable, comprehensive, quality coverage for all Utahns.

6. Civic Engagement Resources

REMEMBER: You can get a message to your senator by calling the Capitol switchboard at:
House: (801) 538-1029 Toll Free: (800) 908-4261
Senate: (801) 538-1035 Toll Free: (800) 613-0677

Or, look up home or work phone numbers on our legislator contact list, available on our website: <http://www.healthpolicyproject.org/2007%20Legislators.xls> Don't know who your legislators are? Look it up here: <http://capwiz.com/utahchildren/state/main/?state=UT&view=myofficials#00>

Take a look at the advocacy toolkit on our website: <http://www.healthpolicyproject.org/LegActionCenter/toolkit.htm> You can also call our office at 801-433-2299 to schedule a training and strategy session of your own.

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