

# THE UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

## HEALTH MATTERS

Utah *Health Matters* for October 9, 2007

Hello Health Advocates & Friends!

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### 1. United Way Financial Stability Council Health Reform Proposal & U-SHARE

Comprised of many business, civic, religious, education, and government leaders, the United Way Financial Stability Council (FSC), recently went public with its health reform proposal. You can find the entire report at the following link on pages 15-16 and 22-27:

[http://uwfinancialstability.org/images/stories/fsc\\_working\\_group\\_report\\_v9-24.pdf](http://uwfinancialstability.org/images/stories/fsc_working_group_report_v9-24.pdf).

The paper outlines a framework for true health reform in Utah. For the next two months, the FSC is seeking public comment on the proposal. Now is the time to not only provide comment, but to be working on the details to ensure that health reform works for all (the uninsured, business owners, taxpayers, Medicaid/PCN enrollees and you).

#### Let Your Voice Be Heard

You can provide input and be active in the health reform discussion in a number of ways:

1. Take the [survey](#) on the [United Way Financial Stability Council's](#) website seeking **your story** and **your feedback** on what direction Utah should take with health reform.
2. Attend one of the upcoming **town hall meetings** sponsored by UHPP in conjunction with the United Way and the Salt Lake Chamber. They are currently being scheduled in a number of communities around the state in the end of October and beginning of November. Stay tuned for more information.
3. If you are a **small business owner**, attend one of the **focus groups** UHPP is conducting with a group of MBA students at the University of Utah (and business students from the Marriott School at BYU). We will be hosting many focus groups throughout the month around the state. For more information or to attend an upcoming focus group, call or email Elizabeth Garbe at 433-2299or [elizabeth@healthpolicyproject.org](mailto:elizabeth@healthpolicyproject.org).
4. Join [U-SHARE](#) (Utahns for Sustainable HeAlth REform), a coalition consisting of the Salt Lake Chamber, the United Ways of Utah, and other organizations and individuals working to ensure that health reform works for all Utahns.

For more information on any of the above please contact Elizabeth Garbe, Coverage Initiatives Director, at [elizabeth@healthpolicyproject.org](mailto:elizabeth@healthpolicyproject.org) or 433-2299.

## **2. Executive Appropriations to decide whether to implement Medicaid Vision Benefit**

The legislature's Executive Appropriations committee (leadership) will decide at its October 16<sup>th</sup> meeting (1:00 PM in Room W135) whether the Department of Health can implement a modified Medicaid vision benefit for eligible adults.

The program was originally to be implemented this past July, but earlier this year problems arose because the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) would not approve the \$10 co-pay. The Department of Health has asked the Legislature to allow them to implement the program with the usual \$3 co-pay (which is permissible) for the remaining 9 months of the fiscal year. They are in the process of exploring possible alternative mechanisms. However, the DOH is not hopeful. Assuming that the co-pay is not approved, the DOH has asked the Legislature for guidance as to how it wishes to see the appropriated funds expended. We need to push the Department to expedite the process because, as it stands now, glasses will not be available until several months after the July start of the new fiscal year. Sen. Knudsen will be making the motion to implement the restoration for 9 months. Please support him and encourage the committee members to support the motion.

## **3. Grandma's on the Move for Children's Health Call for Override of Bush's SCHIP Veto**

As many of you know, President Bush vetoed the bipartisan State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) reauthorization bill this week. Bush's action has caused outcry from all segments, including a bunch of Grandmas in Utah. Utah Grandmother May Romo has sent out the call for all Grandmas to join ***Grandmas on the Move for Children's Health***. Grandmas on the Move will be meeting at the Shriners Hospital Auditorium on **October 16<sup>th</sup> at 10am** to call for Utah's Congressional Delegation to override the President's Veto.

Currently Utah has two strong supporters of the CHIP program. For the last year Utah Senator Orrin Hatch has led the fight for a strong, bipartisan CHIP reauthorization bill. Together with Rep. Jim Matheson, he is calling on Congress to override the veto. Unfortunately the rest of the Utah delegation have not been as supportive. But there is still time for the rest of Utah's members to get on board!

The House will take up the override vote first, likely on October 18<sup>th</sup> and Grandma on the Move want to make sure Utah Representatives Chris Cannon and Rob Bishop vote to support children's health. Gerry, the grandmother of two boys with cystic fibrosis who received their life-saving diagnosis through CHIP, said "[President Bush] is ignorant of the fact that by his veto he is denying the most needy in our country." "We want Congressman Cannon and the rest of Utah's delegation to know we can't stand for this veto, it must be overridden.

### ***Grandmas on the Move for Children's Health***

When: Tuesday, October 16, 2007 10:00-10:45 AM

Where: Shriners Hospital Auditorium, 1275 Fairfax Rd, Salt Lake City

For further information contact Lincoln Nehring at UHPP: 801-433-2299 (cell: 801-638-7695),

[lincoln@healthpolicyproject.org](mailto:lincoln@healthpolicyproject.org)

## **4. NFIB (National Federation of Independent Businesses) Fall Health Care Conference**

If you have ever complained about the high cost of health insurance, be sure to attend. Come and let your voice be heard.

**Details on NFIB's Fall Health Care Conference**

## **Health Care Reform in Utah: Will it Really Help?**

**Thursday, October 25, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**  
**South Towne Exposition Center**  
9575 South State Street, Sandy

\$20/person in advance, \$30 at the door;  
Registration includes lunch

Health care maintains top billing on the electoral agenda. Mandates loom large on the horizon. And there is no shortage of proposals for how to end the health care crisis, but the crisis continues.

Your opinion is needed on this issue. Utah's principal players in this discussion are here to present their ideas. Will the solutions they present really help small business with the high cost of health insurance, or will those solutions become too expensive or burdensome.

### **Presentations from (with Q&A opportunities):**

- John T. Nielsen and Norm Thurston, The Governors Initiative on the Uninsured - The Utah Health Insurance Exchange
- Lane Beattie, United Way/Salt Lake Chamber Health Systems Reform Proposal
- Representative Jim Dunnigan, Small Group Reform
- Kelly Atkinson, Utah Health Insurance Association
- Don Garlitz and Brad Kunhausen, Utah Association of Health Underwriters
- Judith Hilman, Utah Health Policy Project
- Mark Bair, M.D., President of Utah Medical Association
- Dave Gessell, Utah Hospital Association

If you are concerned about Health Insurance for your Small Business you don't want to miss this conference. New directions for health care will be presented, and a poll of our attendees will be taken.

### **Possible solutions that you will hear about at the Conference:**

- Mandate Individual health insurance coverage
- Possible pre-tax dollars if purchased through the health insurance exchange
- Possible financing for those with limited incomes or
- Those whose employers do not provide benefits
- Portability from job to job

Exit Strategies – Ever thought about how to get out? An educational presentation on "Exit Strategies for Small Business Owners" will be included as part of your meeting experience.

For more information, and to register, visit [http://www.nfib.com/object/IO\\_34958.html](http://www.nfib.com/object/IO_34958.html). Or log onto [www.nfib.com/ut](http://www.nfib.com/ut) and find a link to the event in the left-hand column. Here you can download a registration form and receive additional instructions.

Direct any questions or concerns to Kim Noble, Member Support Manager at [kim.noble@nfib.org](mailto:kim.noble@nfib.org) or toll-free at 1-866-476-6332.

### **5. Health Action Calendar**

Happenings in the health advocacy world can be found on the Utah Health Policy Project's [HEALTH ACTION CALENDAR](#)

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