

# THE UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

## HEALTH MATTERS

Utah *Health Matters* E-Newsletter!

July 13, 2007

Hello Health Advocates!

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### 1. CHIP—Hatch and Senate Finance Committee Colleagues Reach \$ 35 billion Compromise

This week the Senate Finance Committee reached a \$35 billion compromise on CHIP reauthorization. The bi-partisan agreement represents an important step in the process and moves toward the goal of covering more children. The ability of Senators Baucus, Grassley, Rockefeller, and Hatch to reach a bi-partisan agreement on CHIP reauthorization represents an important step in reauthorization of this critical program. Given the heated political environment, the ability to forge an agreement is testament to the broad public support for covering more of America's children, and to the willingness of lawmakers to reach across partisan lines to move forward in covering more of America's uninsured children. Coupled with recent statements by Senators Grassley and Hatch, the emerging agreement sends a strong signal that leading Republicans in Congress are not following the Administration's harsh, ideological attacks on CHIP and, instead, are looking for ways to sustain and strengthen the remarkable success of CHIP.

However, the agreement falls short and will mean that millions of American children remain uninsured. By agreeing to only \$35 billion of the \$50 billion provided for children's health coverage in the congressional budget resolution, the Senate agreement likely leaves too many of America's uninsured children without coverage, including millions who already qualify for CHIP or Medicaid. With many details of the agreement still forthcoming, it is not yet possible to fully assess it. But, the agreement also appears to fall short on some significant issues crucial to ensuring the children have access to the health care that they need.

### 2. Interim Day is this Wednesday July 18 (Topics of Interest by committee)

Note: from now on we will only highlight topics pertaining to Medicaid/CHIP/PCN, health reform/coverage for uninsured, small business health care coverage, private insurance, health care costs, and health disparities. *Our brief comment on the topics is in red italics.*

**Health & Human Services Committee Room W020 9:00 a.m.**

*Vaccines for Underinsured Children*

The Committee will study how to increase the availability of vaccines to children without health

insurance or other coverage specifically for vaccines. Utah has one of the worst vaccination rates in the U.S. *The new grant submitted by Comunidades Unidas on behalf of Multicultural Health Network focuses on improving vaccination and immunization for all ages, with a special focus on children.*

#### *Control and Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases*

The Committee will consider draft legislation that would require the Department of Health to distribute information to health professionals and the public about sexually transmitted diseases, their probable side effects if left untreated, and locally available treatment providers. *Critical and highly sensitive discussion not to be missed. STDs disproportionately impact low-income and racial/ethnic communities, thus it is doubly important to distribute complete and accurate information.*

### **Workforce Services Committee 2:00 p.m. Room W025**

#### *Economic Development Incentives*

Jason Perry, Director, Governor's Office of Economic Development

*He will likely discuss the Exchange, a mechanism for facilitating access to affordable Health insurance products that meet yet-to-be-determined (we hope positive) criteria.*

### **3. Medicaid Interim Committee meets next Friday, July 20, 2007 • 9:00 a.m. • Room W135**

*NOTE: This is the first meeting since the 2007 Legislative Session. Please make every effort to attend these very important meetings.*

(Background materials are posted at  
<http://www.le.utah.gov/asp/interim/Commit.asp?Year=2006&Com=INTMED>.)

#### *Overview of Pharmaceutical Expenditures in Utah's Medicaid Program*

The Committee will receive an overview of pharmaceutical expenditures in Utah's Medicaid program and an update on implementation of a preferred drug list.

*As the number 1 cost driver in Medicaid, pharmaceuticals also offer the most opportunities for managing costs in the program. Last Session advocates and providers were successful in making the argument to maximize efficiencies in drug purchasing and re-investing these savings in better access (reimbursement rates). Therefore it is very important to ensure complete implementation of the PDL and related initiatives.*

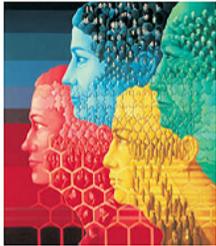
#### *The Future of Pharmaceuticals in Utah's Medicaid System*

The Committee will receive presentations on efforts underway, and efforts that should be considered, in order to respond to the increasing demand for, and costs of, pharmaceuticals.

### **4. SAVE THE DATE: Multicultural Health Network Health Conference August 10**

The Multicultural Health Network Health Disparities Summit (hosted by Comunidades Unidas) will be August 10, all day. See attached postcard for details/ to reserve space (1<sup>st</sup> come, 1<sup>st</sup> served). Highlights include Sen. Bob Bennett (on the Healthy Americans Act), Dr. Thomas La Veist (invited researcher in the field), Families USA's Rea Pañares, and others.

4th Annual  
Multicultural Health Network Conference  
Making the Connection:  
Bringing Health Disparities to the Health Reform Table



Save the Date: August 10, 2007  
Location: Radisson Hotel  
215 West South Temple, Salt Lake City UT 84101  
Time: 8:00 am - 4:00 PM



Conference Co-sponsored by the UDOH, Center for Multicultural Health and  
The Utah Office of Ethnic Affairs

To register please email [isabel@cutah.org](mailto:isabel@cutah.org) or for more information please contact (801) 898-3923  
The Multicultural Health Network is a project coordinated by Comunidades Unidas "CU"

Funded by the UDOH, Center for Multicultural Health

## 5. Health Policy Calendar

Keep up to date on all events and activities related to health policy and covering the uninsured by visiting:

<http://www.healthpolicyproject.org/UHPP/calendar.html>

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