

THE UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

# HEALTH MATTERS

*on the Hill...*



Utah *Health Matters* E-Newsletter: 2008 Legislative Session Edition  
January 28, 2008

Greetings Health Advocates:

1. [HB 133 Health System Reform \(Rescheduled Hearing!\)](#)
2. [Sen. Christensen to Sponsor Legislation to Restore Vision for FY2008](#)
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1. **HB 133 Health System Reform: Rescheduled Hearing is this Wed 8:00 AM**

In an effort to gain support for [HB133](#), Health System Reform, Rep. David Clark has postponed the public hearing again. The bill will be heard in [House Business and Labor Standing Committee](#) on Wednesday, January 30, at 8am. This bill is a moving target, so **be sure to double check the [calendar](#) on Tuesday evening to make sure it is still scheduled to be heard.** A [substitute bill](#) has been posted to the web site.

UHPP continues to support the bill as a vehicle for moving health reform forward in Utah. *YET*, we do *NOT* support any provisions that are harmful to children and families (see lines 105-108 on the [substitute bill](#)). UHPP has met several times with Rep. Clark to discuss the sections of the bill that we believe do harm to low income Utahns. While some provisions have been changed for the better, the harmful CHIP provision remains. Now is the time to talk 1-on-1 with [committee members](#)

to help them understand that the 1<sup>st</sup> principle of health system reform must be to DO NO HARM. This provision will harm low-income children, therefore it must be removed. There are many stakeholders and coalition partners working to remove this provision—stay tuned. Tomorrow we will post a new fact sheet along with talking points and recommendations on strategy as we move forward.

## **2. Sen. Christensen to Sponsor Legislation to Restore Vision for FY2008**

Senator Christensen is sponsoring legislation to allow the Department of Health to provide vision care for the rest of the 2008 fiscal year (bill number coming soon). 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 bill will allow the Department of Health to use the money allocated last session to provide vision care without a co-pay or the sole source requirement.

## **3. Speaker Curtis Sponsors HB326, Opening Enrollment for CHIP**

House Speaker Greg Curtis is proposing legislation to remove the state's ability to cap CHIP enrollment. 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 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's legislation will ensure the program will be available when families need it.

## **4. Multicultural Health Legislation**

[HB131](#) Community-Based Self Sufficiency Grants (Rep. Seelig) should be scheduled for a committee hearing shortly. Watch for announcements for MHN about a strategy meeting to coordinate testimony. Meantime, click [here](#) for our new factsheet and talking points.

We are working closely with Rep. Chazez-Houck on a bill 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)

## **5. [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 (*will be posted by 11:00 pm tonight*).

## **6. [2008 Legislative Calendar for Health Advocates](#)**

Keep track of events happening at the Capitol this session. The Calendar for Health Advocates has dates, time, and information. Please join us for the 1<sup>st</sup> gathering 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) This is a wonderful chance to compare notes and coordinate strategy

on the many Medicaid and CHIP funding issues for the session.

## 7. [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.

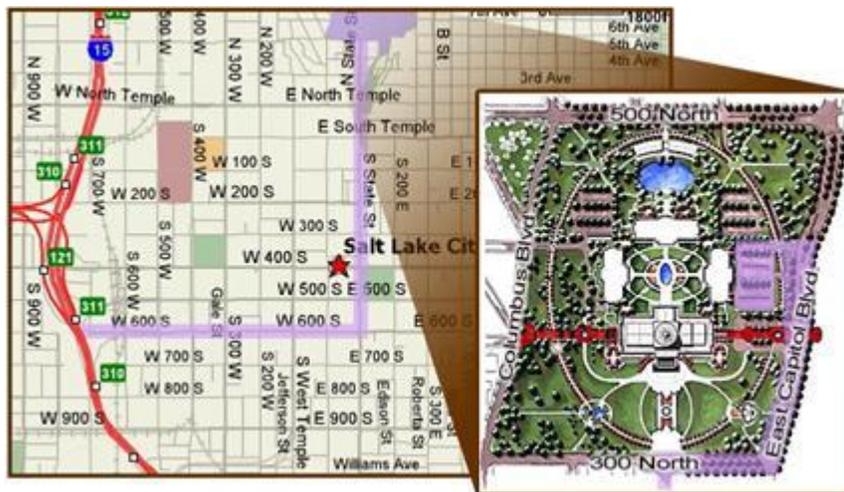
### [Call Your Legislator Cheat Sheet:](#)

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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