

Public event to look at Affordable Care Act

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OGDEN — With the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act approaching its Oct. 1 sign-up date, Weber County residents will have a chance to attend a nonpartisan presentation that will give them a chance to get better informed about the imminent changes in health insurance.

The Utah Health Policy Project will give a presentation today at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium of Weber County's Main Library, 2464 Jefferson Ave., in Ogden. UHPP is nonpartisan, and was formed in Salt Lake City nearly seven years ago to inform people about health care policies and affordability.

"The presentation is part of our public outreach. We do a health care 101 presentation, which explains how it will affect you and Utah. We answer lots of questions," said Jason Stevenson, the education and communications director of UHPP.

The presentation came about after Kathryn Pudlock, manager of the Pleasant Valley Branch, heard Stevenson speak and thought the organization's approach to teaching about the ACA might help Weber County.

"I thought it would be useful to teach the staff and inform the public. Whether you are for it or against it, it is happening. People need to understand what their choices are. Because we're having the presentation, a lot of people think we are for it, but that's not our place. We just want to inform people," Pudlock said.

All age groups are welcome to attend the presentation, which is following on the heels of nearly 50 other presentations UHPP has made since March to inform people about the Affordable Care Act.

"People are pleasantly surprised. We talk about how this is focused on bringing more people into private insurance. It strengthens and expands the private insurance market in Utah and across the country," Stevenson said.

UHPP has spoken at small businesses, senior centers and with interested Utah residents about the implications of the Affordable Care Act, and with legislators about the most effective ways in which to implement national health care reform in Utah.

Today's presentation in Ogden will go over several points that might impact attendees. Part of it will focus on the beginnings of the Affordable Care Act, which, Stevenson said, can be traced back to policies in Massachusetts. It will also discuss the impact upon seniors, a group UHPP believes will be able to pass the learning on to their children and grandchildren who will qualify for the new health care laws.

"Seniors will potentially share the information with their families, and they seem eager and interested about it," Stevenson said.

There might also be questions from attendees about premium tax credits and whether Utah will expand Medicaid, a decision Gov. Gary Herbert has said he will not make until January 2014.

The event is free and open to the public.

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