

# UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

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[www.healthpolicyproject.org](http://www.healthpolicyproject.org)



## COVER THE UNINSURED: NATIONAL HEALTH REFORM AND UTAH

March 25, 2009

6 sites across UT, plus a webcast!

# State Reform: 4 bills passed



HB 188: Insurance Market

HB 165: Administrative Simplification

HB 331: Health Insurance Coverage in State Contracts

SB79: Medical Malpractice Amendments

Photo by Laura  
Seitz, Deseret  
News

# Federalism



# Stakeholders: Current System is Not Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Best Choice



# President Obama's Commitment



*“Let there be no doubt: Health care reform cannot wait, it must not wait, and it will not wait another year”*

# Congressional Action



- Increase access to affordable health coverage
- Improving value by reforming the health care delivery systems
- Financing a more efficient health care system

Sen. Baucus (D-MT), Chair Senate Finance Committee

# Baucus National Reform Proposal

- Shared Responsibility between individuals, employers, and government
- Employer Requirement (except for small businesses)  
Pay into fund if do not offer coverage
- Individual mandate *if affordable coverage is available*
- Provides sliding scale subsidies to ensure coverage is affordable (up to 400% of poverty)

# Baucus National Reform Proposal

- Optimize Public Programs
  - ▣ Expand Medicaid to 100% of poverty for all adults
  - ▣ Expand CHIP to 250% of poverty
- Provide tax credit for small employers to encourage them to offer and maintain employee coverage

# Baucus National Reform Proposal

- Focus on cost containment and quality improvement
  - Establish new agency to study comparative effectiveness
  - Focus on primary care (increase payment in Medicare)
  - Track health disparities
  - Malpractice reform

# Baucus National Reform Proposal

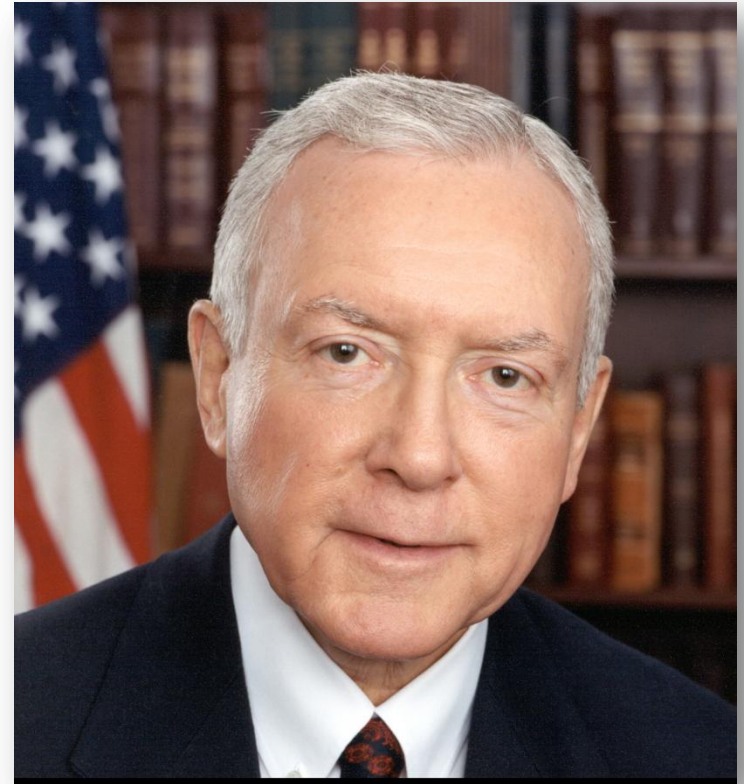
- Create National Insurance Exchange
  - ▣ Individuals and small business can purchase coverage
  - ▣ No discriminating for pre-existing conditions
  - ▣ Guarantee Issue regardless of health status or case characteristics
  - ▣ Define basic benefit package and affordability
  
- Exchange provides a choice of private and public plans

# The Public Plan Option

Undermine market-based competition through their ability to impose price controls and shift costs to other purchasers.

Unlevel playing field and inevitably doom true competition.

Leave single government-run program controlling all of the market.



# The Public Plan Option

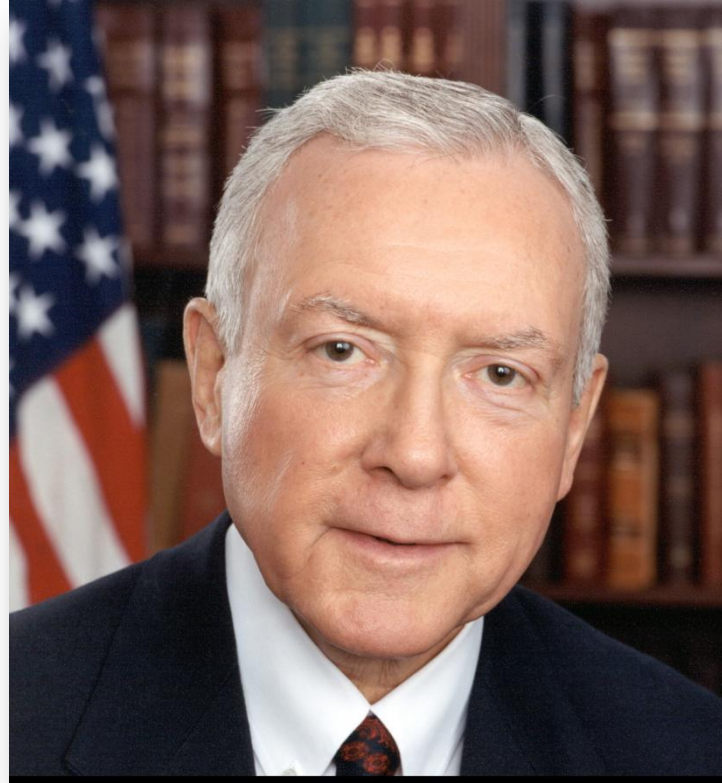


Len Nichols

Author of New America Foundation report “A Modest Proposal for a Competing Public Health Plan”

[Click here to read his report](#)

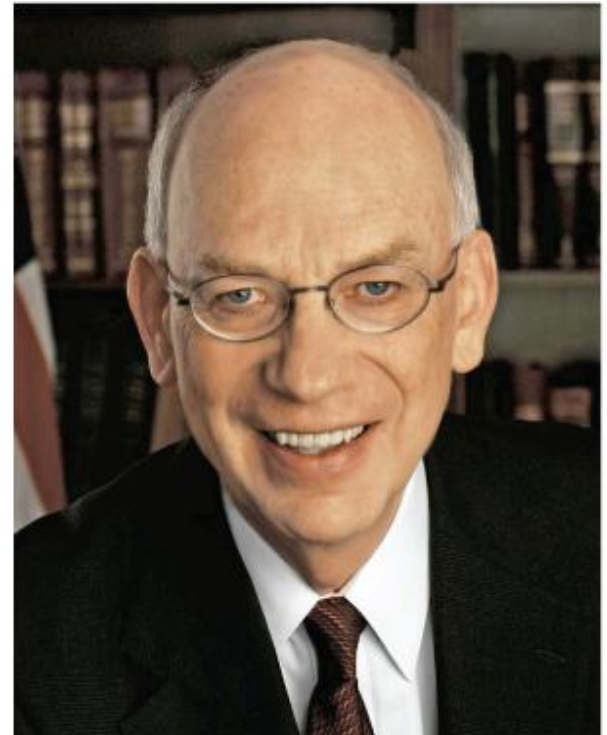
# Senator Hatch on Reform



Committed to finding a bi-partisan and fiscally responsible solution this year

# Senator Bennett on Reform

“Republicans are coming to the understanding that their opposition to universal coverage is misplaced...Let's understand that when we say we cover everybody...that is not a step toward a single-payer government-run system.”

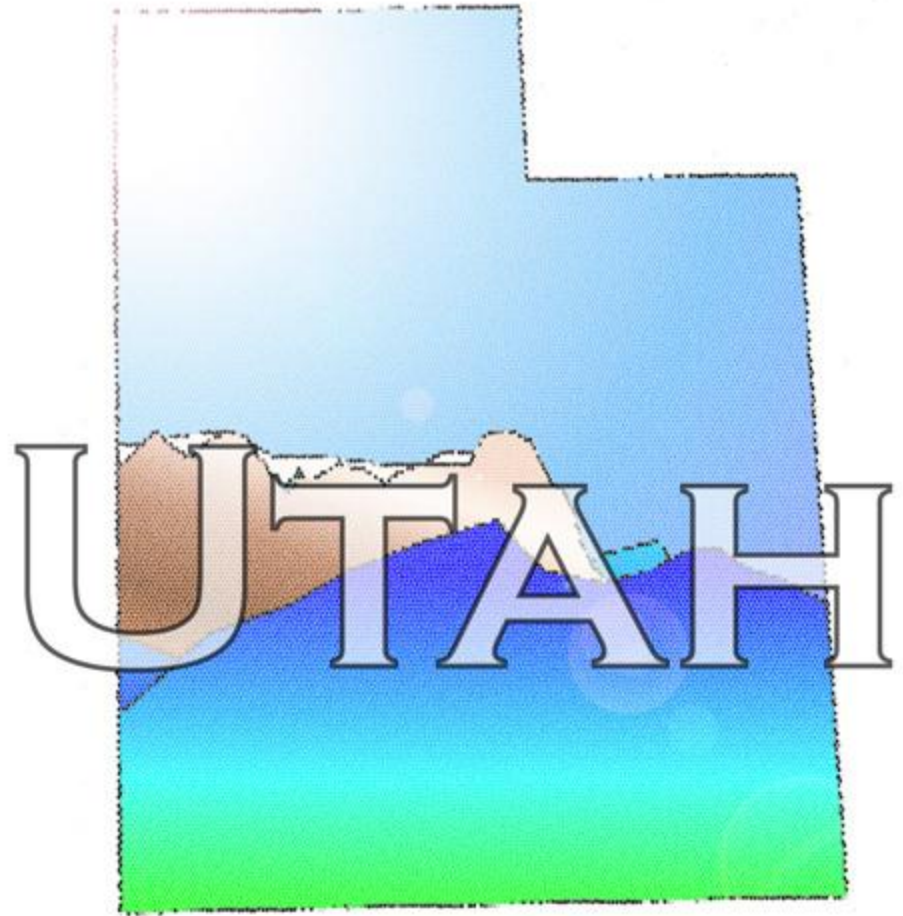


# Senator Bennett on Reform

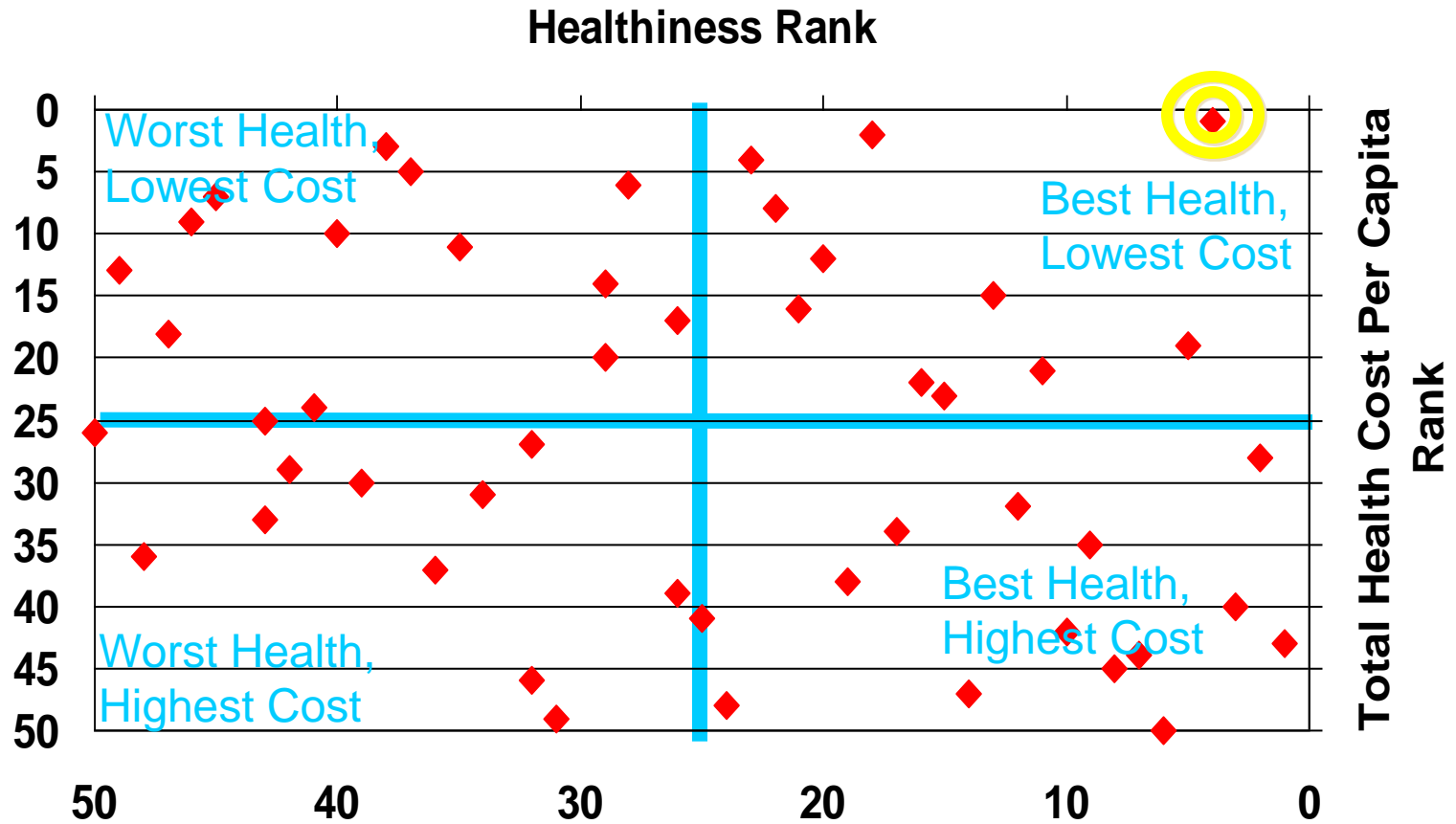
- Sponsor of the Healthy Americans Act (S391)
  - Tax Reform
  - Portability
  - Choice
  - Healthy Behavior
  - Market Forces

# Utah Values

- Cost containment
- Quality Improvement
- Fiscal Sustainability



# State Rankings of Healthiness Compared to Total Health Cost Per Capita Rank



Source: Healthiness – United Health Foundation  
Total Health Cost – Kaiser Family Foundation

# How pay for reform?

- Even with cost-containment measures, reform will still cost \$\$\$
- The significant down-payments are the biggest hurdle in the current economic and political climate.



# White House Budget

- Creates a \$634 billion reserve account over the next 10 years
- Paid for with equal spending cuts and tax increases



# Budget Proposal

- Reduce Medicare overpayments to private insurers through competitive payments

*“Equally egregious...is the provision in the plan to create a 10-year, \$634 billion “reserve fund” to be used as a down payment on the Europeanization of U.S. health care – an overhaul that could cost as much as \$1 trillion over 10 years and would be financed, in part, by reducing payments to insurers, hospitals and physicians and reductions to Medicare Advantage plans...” -Senator Hatch*

# Budget Proposal

- Reduce drug prices
- Improve Medicare and Medicaid payment accuracy
- Improve care after hospitalizations and reduce hospital admission rates
- Expand hospital quality improvement program
- Reform physician payment system to improve quality and efficiency

# Budget Proposal

- Reduce itemized deduction rates for families with incomes over \$250,000

*“Obama's proposal to end tax deductions for charitable donations may look like it targets the rich, but it will end up robbing the poor...we want to stimulate the economy and we want to take care of people who are in trouble, but then also says we want to punish those who, out of their own generosity, would like to help take care of those who are in trouble.” -Senator Bennett*

# Let the race begin...



# Q & A



# Resources for Uninsured

- COBRA subsidy for workers involuntarily terminated between Sept. 1 2008 and Dec. 31 2009

Call Office of Consumer Health Assistance Office at 801-538-3077 or 866-350-6242

- Open enrollment of Primary Care Network (PCN) until April 30<sup>th</sup>

[www.health.utah.gov/pcn](http://www.health.utah.gov/pcn)

# Resources for Uninsured

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- Utah Premium Partnership (premium subsidy to help buy employer insurance) [www.health.utah.gov/upp](http://www.health.utah.gov/upp)
- More resources at [www.healthpolicyproject.org](http://www.healthpolicyproject.org)

# Get Involved

- Sign up to receive email updates
- Endorse U-SHARE [www.ushare-utah.org](http://www.ushare-utah.org)
- Call Senators and your Congressman and urge them to support funding meaningful health system reform in the Congressional Budget!

Call them at **1-800-828-0498**

# Get Involved

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- Attend District Meetings with your Congressman and Senators (UHPP will be organizing these for May and August)
- Participate in our Storybank Project
  - ▣ Share your personal experience & perspective as a health care consumer or help us find stories!

# Thank You!

