



MONDAY, February 8, 2010

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Utah News

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Utah lawmakers focus on local health care reform

The Salt Lake Tribune

Updated: 02/05/2010 06:54:27 PM MST

A resolution denouncing federal health care reform continued to make its way through the Legislature Friday, as the House Health and Human Services Standing Committee unanimously approved the statement. Lawmakers lauded Utah's independent effort to improve local health care and to continue the new online insurance market known as the Health Exchange.

Rep. David Clark, R-Santa Clara, is proposing improvements to the exchange in HB294. "There are no mandates [on participating] in this bill, unlike in Washington, D. C.," he said.

Gov. Gary Herbert spoke at the committee hearing in support of Clark's bill. "What I appreciate here in Utah -- we've not sat back," he said.

Among the changes discussed Friday are new consumer protections in high deductible plans. But much work remains, according to the Utah Health Policy Project, which pointed to the large number of employers that dropped out of the health exchange during its pilot launch.

"This is because we're not making any of the big changes needed to bring down costs for these businesses and their employees," said Janice Houston of UHHP in a news release. "Though we may be getting closer."

-- Julia Lyon

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