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Countdown to Real Reform

Just two days old, the 2013 Legislative Session is shaping up to be the most important session for health care reform we've ever seen. Big decisions loom on how Utah addresses the ACA. Not only will we learn whether Utah has a state-run or federal [exchange](#), but we'll see key legislation about how these exchanges will be operated ([Rep. Dunnigan](#)). Other bills or initiatives seek to expand accountable care ([Rep. Mike Kennedy](#)), increase the number of medical school slots ([Sen. Valentine](#)), integrate mental, behavioral, and physical health care ([Rep. Sanpei](#)), and boost rural and community health workers ([Sen. Robles](#)). That is the short list of priority bills or amendment efforts for UHPP. Since this is Utah, there will probably be a few bombs and surprises tossed in the mix.

Please note the high number of bill requests with health-related titles. UHPP is doing our best to track these down and create better opportunities for input. Here's what we do know.

Affordable Care Act

"Utah will have an ACA-compliant exchange." That's what [Gary Cohen](#), director of CCIIO, the HHS department in charge of the ACA exchanges, told us during a December 28, 2012 conference call. What did he mean? Whether we end up with a [state-run or federally-run exchange](#), Cohen is confident it will satisfy



Calendar

Utah's 2013 Legislative Session: January 28th – March 14th, 2013

Visit the [legislature's website](#) to see the legislative schedule, and find bills and representatives and senators.

UHPP Coalition Meetings (U4ME and U-EAT)

Join us at the Capitol every Wednesday for these strategy meetings in the [Olmsted Room at the Capitol- Senate Building](#) (East Side)

Family Investment Coalition

Wednesdays, 12:15-1:00pm

Utahns for Medicaid Expansion (U4ME) Utah Exchange Action Today (U-EAT)

Wednesdays, 1:00-2:00pm

Social Services Appropriations Meeting on Medicaid Expansion

Friday, February 1, 2013

Time: 8:00am

ACA requirements for quality, affordability, and accessibility. But his pledge doesn't mean that we can relax and wait for the perfect exchange to materialize. How closely Utah's exchange mirrors the goals of the ACA is directly related to our actions during the rest of 2013. That's because the bias in Utah is to chip away at key elements of the ACA like governance, funding, and Medicaid eligibility until it becomes a shadow of the law it was meant to be. Unfortunately, the federal government seems [willing to accommodate](#) obstinate states like Utah in order to get them to play along.

Right now the governor's health reform team is attempting to make Utah's exchange plan more ACA-compliant, despite [opposition from legislative leadership](#). Could the legislature try to derail the governor's goal of a state-run exchange. Absolutely. Ironically, these conservative legislators [want the federal government to run Utah's exchange!](#) And we've heard rumors that they plan to claim Gov. Herbert doesn't have the authority to negotiate with HHS. At the same time the legislature will consider [Rep. Jim Dunnigan's](#) (R-Taylorsville) [omnibus health reform amendments](#) that will reauthorize the Health System Reform Task Force, set navigator policy for Utah's exchanges, and improve the governance language. We see several different ACA factions developing in the 2013 General Session—with no clear sense of where the issues will land.

Where we stand: UHPP will advocate for Utah to adopt a fully ACA-compliant state exchange built on the backbone of [Avenue H](#), the state's existing small business exchange. We will push for improved navigator policy, mental health parity, and improved governance within Rep. Dunnigan's Health System Reform Amendments. We will work to strengthen the moderate coalitions in the legislature that favor moving Utah's health reform process towards full compliance with the ACA.

Get Involved:

Join us at the Capitol every Wednesday for these

Location: Room 30, House Building

[Agenda](#)

Issue: [Public Input on Optional Expansion for Medicaid](#) and other topics on agenda

Note: Must contact Debbie Benson before 3 p.m. Thursday, January 31st at 801-538-1034 to get on the list to testify.

Community Open Forum on Health Reform

Time: 2nd Thursdays of every month at 9:30am (first meeting February 14th)

Location: TBD (watch for notice on [UHPP's](#) website)

Issue: Stakeholder discussion and sounding board arranged by Dr. Norm Thurston, the governor's Health Reform Implementation Coordinator, regarding Utah's health exchanges (Avenue H) and ACA implementation.

strategy meetings in the [Olmsted Room at the Capitol](#).

[Senate Building](#) (East Side)

Family Investment Coalition

Wednesdays, 12:15-1:00pm

Utahns for Medicaid Expansion (U4ME)/ Utah

Exchange Action Today (U-EAT)

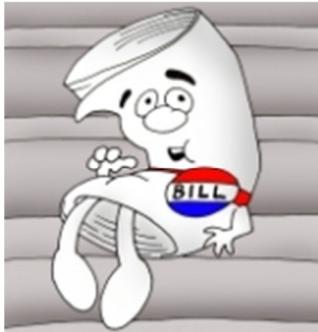
Wednesdays, 1:10-2:00pm

UHPP Briefing Papers:

[The Affordable Care Act 2013 - The Road Ahead for](#)

[Utah](#)

[Good Governance for Utah's Exchange](#)



It's GS Time

If you don't already know your state representative and senator, the 2013 General Session is a great time to reach out.

Read more [here](#).

Focus: Health Reform Bills

Utah has been experimenting with health reform since 2009—mainly through its small business exchange, [Avenue H](#). But with full implementation of the ACA less than one year away, the time for cautious experimentation is over.

Read more [here](#).



2013 GS top tweeters with health policy-related content:

[@UHPP](#), [@utahpolitics](#), [@utpolcapitol](#), [@GOPTodd](#), [@DeidreHenderson](#), [@utchildren](#),
[@sltrib](#), [@SLTribPolitics](#), [@UtahPolicy](#), [@SutherlandInst](#), [@RobertGehrke](#),
[@HollyontheHill](#), [@deseretnews](#)

Utah’s top political websites:

[UHPP](#); [UHPP on Facebook](#); [UHPP 2013 Legislative Contact List](#); Utah Legislature; [Utah Political Capitol](#); [Utah Policy](#); [SLT’s Political Cornflakes](#); Sutherland Institute

Best daily/weekly news digests (sign up at these links):

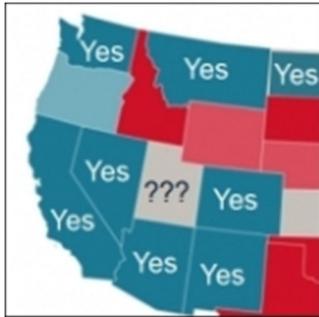
[UHPP’s Health Matters “On the Hill”](#)
[SLT’s Political Cornflakes](#) (send email to sign up)
[Utah Policy Daily](#)
[Utah Political Capitol Updates](#)



UHPP on the Hill

Members of our team will be at the Utah Capitol during the legislative session.

Read more [here](#).



Medicaid Expansion in Limbo

On January 23rd Utah Lt. Gov. Greg Bell declared that Utah won’t consider a Medicaid expansion in 2013—and perhaps in future years, too.

Read more [here](#).



Wanted: More Transparency

Do you know who runs Avenue H? Don’t worry if you can’t recall their names. Until recently, Utah has kept the governance of its small business exchange under wraps.

Read more [here](#).

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