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Senate Bill Closing Utah's Coverage Gap Passes Committee, 3-1

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An important health care bill, [SB 251](#) (*Amendments to Medicaid and Health Care, Sen. B. Shiozawa*), passed favorably out of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee on Thursday morning. The bill addresses the 54,000 Utah residents who currently lack access to affordable health insurance. These are the Utahns living in all 29 counties who earn too little to purchase subsidized private insurance on the *healthcare.gov* marketplace, but earn too much to qualify for Medicaid. "SB 251 is a measured solution that closes Utah's coverage gap. We are very happy to see the Senate discuss this issue," says RyLee Curtis, the Medicaid Policy Analyst at the Utah Health Policy Project (UHPP).

Sen. Shiozawa's Private Option Plan incorporates the recommendations of the legislature's own Health System Reform Task Force, as well as the state's Medicaid Options Community Workgroup that met throughout 2013.

"Sen. Shiozawa's bill would provide a new private insurance option to Utahns who don't earn enough to purchase their own insurance, or work part-time jobs that lack health coverage. It leverages Utah's contribution by returning more of our own federal tax dollars to our state," adds Curtis.

Later today we expect an announcement from Gov. Gary Herbert about his own plan to close Utah's coverage gap.

"The Governor has pledged to find a common-sense, Utah solution to close the coverage gap, and I

expect he will deliver that,” states Matt Slonaker, executive director of the UHPP. “It’s going to take real work to construct a coverage plan that can pass both chambers and meet the Governor’s goals. There are some good things in the House leadership bill (HB 401) that can be addressed in the Senate bill,” adds Slonaker. “We look forward to effective collaboration in the days ahead.”

For a detailed comparison of the two legislative coverage bills, download UHPP’s 1-pager PDF at the link below:

Link: http://www.healthpolicyproject.org/Publications_files/legislative/2014/NewPlanCompare-4js.pdf

We will provide analysis and commentary on the Governor’s plan after it is announced on Thursday afternoon.

HB401 (Utah Access Plan)

Sponsor: Rep. Jim Dunnigan

Link: <http://le.utah.gov/~2014/bills/static/HB0401.html>

SB 251 (Amendments to Medicaid and Health Care)

Sponsor: Sen. B. Shiozawa

Link: <http://le.utah.gov/~2014/bills/static/HB0401.html>

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