



Governor Announces His Plan to Close Utah's Coverage Gap

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In an afternoon press conference today, Utah Gov. Gary Herbert outlined his plans to close Utah's coverage gap.

His new Healthy Utah Plan has several components:

- Asking the federal government to support a 3-year pilot program called the Healthy Utah Plan
- Closing the coverage gap for 111,000 Utahns (under 133% of the federal poverty limit) who lack access to health insurance
- Using private insurance as the vehicle for coverage (possibly through the state's Avenue H marketplace)
- Seeking federal funding at the most efficient match rate possible
- Requiring limited cost-sharing for some recipients

"The governor takes a comprehensive approach to fix Utah's coverage gap. He is demonstrating that he is a wise steward of Utah taxpayer dollars, and his plan would bring all of those resources back to the state," says RyLee Curtis, Medicaid Policy Analyst at Utah Health Policy Project (UHPP).

UHPP has some concerns with the governor's plan. But we are also optimistic we can work through those issues. Ultimately, the federal government—the Department of Health and Human Services—has the final say if any Utah plan is approvable and will receive federal matching funds. We believe the federal government is most concerned with closing the coverage gap and ensuring that low-income Utahns receive access to quality and affordable insurance.

There are now three proposals--the governor's Healthy Utah Plan, the House leadership bill ([HB401](#)), and the bill emerging in the Senate ([SB251](#))--being debated in the legislature. All

three plans respect that "doing nothing" is not a viable option for this state. However, we believe that only two plans--the SB251 and the Governor's--will close the coverage gap and make the wisest use of Utah's taxpayer dollars.

"There are good ideas in each plan," says Matt Slonaker, UHPP executive director. The next step is hammering out a deal that gives Utah's low-income residents access to decent health-care coverage. The governor's plan--if supported by the legislature--will provide him the ability to start negotiations with the federal government and develop to a unique Utah solution. We believe the governor's announcement today gives tremendous momentum to closing Utah's coverage gap."

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