

New report shows the majority of Utahns who would benefit from expanded healthcare are working

Link: <http://www.good4utah.com/story/d/story/new-report-shows-the-majority-of-utahns-who-would/41929/TwtiKlIFHkW08ZTjK1ETCQ>

Video: <http://www.clipsyndicate.com/video/play/5123897>

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Utah) – A new report identifies working Utahns as the largest group that would benefit from the state expanding healthcare access.

Utah Health Policy Project and Families USA released the findings based on Census data Wednesday.

These advocacy groups say the results matter, because it counters the common perception that those who fall into the coverage gap are just looking for a hand out.

"These people are working, they just don't have access to employer sponsored insurance or the employer sponsored insurance they do have access to is just simply unaffordable," said RyLee Curtis, with Utah Health Policy Project.

The report concludes 66% of Utahns who would be eligible for coverage under full Medicaid expansion work now or have in the last year.

Another 18% are considered not in the workforce.



We're talking students, non-working spouses, people with disabilities and those who have left the workforce.

That leaves 16% who are considered unemployed.

Those who are working are in a variety of fields.

Food services, sales, retail and construction to name a few.

"These are the backbone of our employment sector," said Curtis.

Under the Affordable Care Act anyone at or below 138% of the federal poverty level was supposed to be covered by full Medicaid expansion.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that unconstitutional and left it to the states.

Utah is one of 24 states that have not expanded.

Governor Herbert is pushing his Healthy Utah Plan, but he needs approval from the House and Senate which have rolled out different ideas.

"I think we should be resistant to perpetuating the problems we already know exist in Medicaid and the more people that we put on this program, that is already broken, the less likely it is that we are going to fix it," said Utah Speaker of the House, Becky Lockhart.



A legislative task force is now studying all the options and will report back to leaders in both chambers.

In the meantime, thousands of uninsured Utahns are hoping for the best.

"They are one catastrophe away from just falling apart, so strengthening their access to healthcare [↗](#) coverage strengthens Utah's economy."

That legislative task force is meeting Thursday morning to go over progress.

Governor Herbert is closing in on federal approval for his plan and is planning on a special session sometime this summer.

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