

Work requirement is a stumbling block in negotiations for governor's Healthy Utah Plan

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ABC4 (KTVX)
By Glen Mills

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SALT LAKE CITY, Utah- (ABC 4 Utah) – Negotiations for the Healthy Utah Plan are going slower than Governor Herbert thought they would.

He and the federal [government](#) have agreed on most of the issues, but the work requirement is a sticking point.



Charlotte Lawrence is battling two types of cancer without [insurance](#).

She is one of an estimated 57,000 who fall into the coverage gap in our state.

They make too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to qualify for subsidized coverage on the federal market place.

With each passing day the challenges mount.

"Recently, I had to end up declaring bankruptcy. It finally just became unbearable. I filed for \$196,000 all in medical debt," said Lawrence.

Governor Herbert's [solution](#) is the Healthy Utah Plan.

It would use \$258,000,000 in the form of a federal block grant to provide 111,000 Utahns with a private [insurance plan](#).

The governor wants state flexibility and is trying to get the federal government to agree.

"I believe it in fact gives us better outcomes and better results, hence that's why I'm proposing it," said Herbert, (R), Ut.

The Obama Administration wants the plan to be available to everyone in the gap, period.

The governor says that takes away the personal responsibility.



"If you are able to work then you ought to at least as a condition for having the tax payers give you free health care or some kind of subsidized health care at least a minimal requirement is that you ought to let the state of Utah help you find a job," said Herbert.

Law makers here at home aren't convinced either.

Senate Chair of the Health Reform Task Force, Allen Christensen admits Healthy Utah is the best of the options on the table for expansion, but he favors not expanding at all.

A stance shared by other key legislators.

"I'm taking from one individual and giving to another. That is very difficult for me to do, we continue to do it, but we have to be responsible for it and I take that charge very, very seriously," said Christensen, (R), Ogden.

Lawrence is in a serious situation of her own and at this point she feels she has no control.

"I don't know, just hoping and praying some resolution comes to an end or I am able to find a job that is going to be more than just \$10, \$12 and hour," said Lawrence.



The governor hopes to have federal approval by the end of September.

Once he has a final product in hand he will turn his focus on convincing the state legislature.

He's confident a deal will get done and even believes other states will follow the Healthy Utah [model](#).

A study earlier this year found 66% of those in the coverage gap are working or have in the last year, 84% work or are not in the workforce.

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