

## Task force unveils proposals to reform state health care system

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By Richard Piatt

The Utah Legislature wants to put the brakes on runaway health care costs. Members of a special task force unveiled three proposals designed to eventually revamp the state's health care and insurance system.

The cost and complexity of even routine health procedures can be frightening: pages of paperwork, uncertainty about coverage and multiple bills for one procedure.



House Speaker-elect David Clark

There can also be cold indifference to certain situations resulting in coverage being canceled when it's needed most.

The Health System Reform Task force has spent thousands of hours seeking solutions, simplifications and system stabilization.

Today, three bills, early drafts to deal with reform, premiered. House Speaker-elect David Clark said, "We're not looking at doing away with employer-based insurance, but perhaps giving the employee more options within that structure."

In very basic terms, the bills tackle three issues:

- Insurance: seeking to give people cheaper and more stable coverage options.
- Lawmakers are also seeking to simplify the administrative side so health care insurers and providers communicate better.
- Another bill would require companies who contract with the state to provide health insurance.



Elizabeth Garbe, with the Utah Health Policy Project

Because it's so early and so complex, public input has been limited so far, but watchdogs are keeping a close eye on each proposal. Elizabeth Garbe, with the Utah Health Policy Project, said, "Not only make sure they can access health care coverage, but at the end, access the care that they truly need."

Reforming the system is a big job and is complex for most observers, but the results may eventually make a life-or-death difference to many people.

So health system reform is moving forward even though a lot of doubters didn't think the task force would make it this far.

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