

Advocates Applaud Lawmaker's Health Care Baby Steps

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(KCPW News) Despite much talk about taking action to reform Utah's health care system, lawmakers did little more than form a task force to study the possibility of change. That said, some healthcare advocates say it's not a negative to take baby steps early in the process.

"We're disappointed we didn't move the ball forward as far as we could have," says Lincoln Nehring, Medicaid Policy Advisor for the Utah Health Policy Project. "But we still have set ourselves up for what I hope to be substantive health system change going forward."

Nehring says Second Substitute House Bill 133 sets the state up for making important changes to the healthcare system. Nehring credits lawmakers for taking other steps, including permanently opening enrollment to the Children's Health Insurance Program, establishing a mini-grant program to help low-income residents acquire health insurance, and providing funding to increase promotion of public healthcare assistance programs.

As the process of health system reform moves forward, Andrew Riggle of the Disability Law Center says they have one main focus.

"Currently long term care is one of the major cost drivers in the health care system overall and will only become more so as the population continues to age and needs long term care services," says Riggle. "We don't feel we can have real health care reform without confronting one of the items clearly responsible for spiraling health care costs."

To hear a longer conversation with Nehring and Riggle about the work being done to reform Utah's healthcare system, click [here](#).