

Health care problem growing even among employed

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OGDEN -- Nearly 300,000 Utahns have no health insurance. The vast majority of them are employed.

Even though both spouses may be holding down a job, they still cannot afford insurance. The Utah Health Policy Project held a health reform seminar on Thursday night at McKay-Dee Hospital to discuss the problems and potential solutions to the health care issues in Utah and across the nation.

"This issue is really on fire," said Judi Hilman, executive director for Utah Health Policy Project, a non-profit, non-partisan organization. "It's looking like not only in Utah, but across the nation as well, health care is going to be the number one domestic issue in the upcoming year."

Hilman said health care costs have been increasing in double digit numbers over the past several years in Utah. She said low and moderate income families are at a greater risk of losing their insurance or not being able to afford it all together.

"We are also the 10th worst in the nation when it comes to insuring our children," she said. "Children should be the low-hanging fruit. We need to get them covered. We really don't want to mess with children."

Some of the problem stems from Utahns not being offered insurance by their employers or not being able to afford the premiums. Hilman said nearly 62 percent of uninsured people in the Utah said they cannot afford the coverage while 38 percent are not offered insurance in the workplace.