



JUDI'S OPENING REMARKS

'Some Assembly Required: Making Health Reform Work for Utah' (October 28, 2010 Annual Conference)

Welcome, everyone, to our conference, 'Some Assembly Required: Making Health Reform Work for Utah!' Today we come together to sort out the challenges of implementing the Affordable Care Act here in Utah. Now I know what you're thinking: uh, this is a tall order! Yes, but you need to know: *we are not alone*. We've got some folks here from Community Catalyst, the National Indian Health Board, Small Business Majority to show us: that implementation *will* certainly be difficult and not just here, but in every state. And we are not alone. We are part of a community of advocates, small business owners, providers, insurers, brokers, policymakers, other stakeholders who know deep down: *it's time to start down the long and twisted path of systemic health reform*—and there is no turning back.

When I go out to present the Affordable Care Act & state reform to groups, without fail I mention this book, *The Healing of America* by T.R. Reid (I did it again!). If you haven't read it, go pick it up. There you will learn about the countries that came before us in reforming their health care systems—many of them using a combination of private market reforms and public program expansions. Guess what? They never got it right the 1st time. Every 6-10 years or so, in fact, they go into another round of reform and fine tuning—*and why should we be any different?*

It gave me solace to read about this also because I know that with time and experience, the reforms *will* make room for more bipartisan content and engagement. This will be important if we want the reforms to stick: *but also to make them better*.

Now Utah may not have much to say yet about issues like affordability or benefit standards, or the role of public programs or how to manage risk for small groups and individuals. The need for a mandate. But where we can add value is around critical questions that will matter more as time goes on: cost containment, transparency, health information technology, wellness, and personal responsibility.

One thing we want to make clear today: is that when it comes to implementation, the state level will be where the rubber meets the road—more on that in a minute.

We've got a lot of ground to cover today, but before we dig in, I'd like to introduce you to the folks from Community Catalyst. All things considered, the concerns of consumers came out on top in the ACA. For this you have these folks and their partners to thank. Let me now introduce to you Debbie Katz from Community Catalyst (click here for [bios](#))...