



HEALTH UPDATE

what's happening in Utah

It may be April Fool's day,
but the need for health system reform is no joke.

Over the next few days our Senators and Representatives will be voting on the federal budget—and whether or not to fund down-payments necessary for comprehensive health system reform this year.

Please call your Senators and Congressman and urge them to invest in the health care reform reserve fund as part of the federal budget.

[Click here](#) for their contact information or call 1-800-828-0498

Quick Links

[Watch UHPP's National Health Reform and Utah Discussion Online](#)

[ACT Now! New COBRA subsidy](#)

[Uninsured Adult? Get primary care coverage through the PCN](#)

[Next Utah Medicaid Partnership Meeting 4/14](#)

Did you miss our Cover the Uninsured: National Health Reform and Utah discussion last week? You can still watch it online!

The webcast will be saved online for another week. [Click here for log-in instructions](#). Please note: the video stream is not edited, so you will have to fast-forward A LOT (past all of the set-up) to the actual beginning of the presentation

ACT NOW! New COBRA Subsidy for Involuntarily Terminated Workers

Utah has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, yet the state is not immune to the recession. From December to February 8,500 jobs were lost. Knowing that keeping your health insurance through *COBRA* can be unaffordable for most people, the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (ARRA) included a subsidy for laid-off workers. **Now, people who were involuntarily terminated between September 1, 2008 and December 31, 2009 are eligible for a 65% premium reduction for up to 9 months.**

To take advantage of COBRA, laid off workers must elect the coverage within 60 days of receiving notice from their insurer. Since the 60-day election period has already passed for workers who were terminated before February 2009, **the ARRA created a second COBRA election period**. This ensures that **workers who were laid off between September 1, 2008 and February 17, 2009 have access to the subsidy**. At the initiative of UHPP, the Utah Legislature ensured employees laid off from small businesses who can only access mini-COBRA could also take advantage of the second election period by passing HB178 Health Insurance and Program Amendments. Mini-COBRA is for people who were employed in a firm with less than 20 employees. **The second election period is for a limited time only: people eligible for mini-COBRA must contact their employer or insurer by April 18, 2009 and have their paper work in by May 1, 2009; people eligible for COBRA have 60 days after the insurer provides the required notice of the second election period**. If you or someone you know is eligible for the second election period and subsidy, you must **ACT NOW!**

For more information or to address problems see the following links and numbers:

- The Utah Insurance Department's new Q&A detailing important dates and information can be found [here](#).
- Also, [click here](#) for a FAQ from the Congressional House Way and Means committee.
- The Office of Consumer Health Assistance in the Utah Insurance Department at 801-538-3077 or 1-800-439-3805.
- The Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration's Benefits Advisors at 1-866-444-3272. Or go to www.dol.gov/COBRA.