

Gov. Herbert discusses health insurance assistance, same-sex marriage

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SALT LAKE CITY – During his monthly news conference, Utah Gov. Gary Herbert spoke about plans to provide health insurance to the poor, same-sex marriage and plans for relocating the state prison.



Herbert spoke Wednesday, and the Healthy Utah plan was among the topics he discussed. The proposal is an alternative to state Medicaid expansion and has the backing of the Obama administration, but Herbert said the public will need to weigh in before a decision is made.

There will be a 30 day window for public comment during the upcoming legislative session.

“I really am optimistic and believe that by the end of the legislative session in 2015, we will have a program in place which will deal with those people who need government assistance, health care, and will have a program in place we can all agree on,” Herbert said.

The plan would use federal funds to pay for the bulk of insurance programs the state would offer to low-income Utahns. Recipients would be required to have a job, be training for a job or be actively looking for work.

“Medicaid, for example, was never designed to be a permanent help,” Herbert said. “It was designed to help people as they transition from a lower income until they got a better job. That’s why it’s a program for those who are in poverty.”

Peter Corroon, Utah Democratic Party chairman, reacted to Herbert’s statements on health care in Utah.

“It’s more dithering, it’s more waiting to see what happens,” he said. “We need action now. We have millions of dollars, \$235 million, which has been sent back to Washington that’s coming out of our Utahns pockets. And meanwhile we have thousands and thousands of Utahns who

could have health insurance that they desperately need, and we don't have it, and they're going to wait even longer to see what happens."

The governor also expressed disappointment in the United States Supreme Court's decision regarding the ruling made about same-sex marriage in Utah. He said he will execute the law while working to protect religious freedom.

"I think there may be some concerns about making sure that we strengthen religious freedom," Herbert said. "I expect that's going to be a topic of discussion. And I think, again, people on all sides of this issue can understand the need to make sure that we are clear when it comes to religious freedom and our ability to exercise it."

And on the issue of relocating a prison, the governor said building a more modern facility will allow the state to not only house prisoners, but rehabilitate them appropriately.

He applauded the idea of possibly reducing drug related crimes to lesser offenses. Such action was proposed earlier this week, [click here for details](#).

"...If they've got addiction and substance abuse problems, let's treat that rather than just put them in a cell and lock 'em up and throw away the key," he said.