

LDS Church Urges "Principled Approach" to Health Care for Needy Utahns

Link: <http://kuer.org/post/lds-church-urges-principled-approach-health-care-needy-utahns>

Audio: http://cpa.ds.npr.org/kuer/audio/2014/12/WEB_HEALTHYLDS_DB_120814.mp3

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By [Dan Bammes](#)

LDS Presiding Bishop Gary Stevenson (L) and Catholic Bishop John Wester (speaking) stood with Governor Gary Herbert (R) at a news conference on the Healthy Utah plan Thursday, December 4, 2014



When Governor Gary Herbert announced the details of his Healthy Utah plan last week, the Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and several other religious leaders stood with him.

But some members of the Utah legislature say there's more than one way to do what those religious leaders are asking – provide health care to needy people in Utah.

After [Presiding Bishop Gary Stevenson](#) appeared at the governor's announcement last week, the LDS Church [issued a statement](#) that stopped short of an endorsement of the Healthy Utah plan.

But a local bishop, David Heslington of the Salt Lake City 12th Ward, thinks Healthy Utah would extend the reach of his efforts to help Mormons and others in his neighborhood.

"Our resources are not unlimited," Heslington tells KUER, "and so this provides some additional support and coverage for a lot of people that would just give up."

Republicans in the Utah legislature will have to decide in the upcoming session whether to support the governor. [Representative James Dunnigan of Taylorsville](#) is co-chair of the Health Care Reform Task Force.

"I did not hear the church say that they were supporting Healthy Utah," Dunnigan said in an interview with KUER. "Seems to me their statement says that they support taking care of those that are truly in need, and I think there are a variety of ways that can be accomplished."

The [Healthy Utah plan](#) would use more than 200-million dollars in federal Medicaid funding to buy private health insurance for needy Utahns. Representative Dunnigan believes it could be modified without necessarily losing that federal money.

KUER's Andrea Smardon contributed to this story.