

# Utah leaders announce consensus on framework for Medicaid expansion

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SALT LAKE CITY -- State leaders in Utah announced Friday they have reached a consensus on a conceptual framework for Medicaid expansion in the Beehive State after a group of six state leaders have continued to meet since the end of the 2015

General Legislative Session.

The group has been working to find a resolution to the so-called "Medicaid coverage gap" that exists under the Affordable Care Act. According to the press release issued Friday, "The framework of this proposal provides coverage for a population up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level utilizing the greatest return of Utah taxpayer dollars through the ACA. It protects the State from cost overruns through a formulaic funding model allowing providers and benefactors of Medicaid dollars to pay their share, and is sustainable for many years to follow. "

Speaker of the House Greg Hughes, R-District 51, stated in the press release: "It is important that we develop a solution that is in the best interest of all Utahns. If we can provide health coverage for those most in need while protecting other critical areas of our state budget, like public education, I believe we will have a model for other states to follow."

Utah Senate President Wayne Niederhauser, R-District 9, stated: "None of this process has been easy, but the negotiations

have been professional and pleasant. This agreement holds out hope that Utah's compassion can harmonize with her common sense and be fiscally sustainable over the long term."

Gov. Gary Herbert also issued a statement in the press release: "I appreciate the process we have engaged in with House and Senate leaders in finding compromise on this important issue. There is still work to be done, but I believe we now have a framework in place that will provide care for Utahns most in need while being responsible with limited taxpayer funds."

The statements above are provided in the same order they were presented in Friday's press release, which also states that the group will meet with stakeholders and policy makers in the coming weeks as they work to create a formal draft. The group will identify specific dates for public hearings through legislative committees and a special legislative session.