

# State leaders roll out conceptual framework for Medicaid expansion solution

Glen Mills  
ABC4 (KTVX)  
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Video: <http://www.clipsyndicate.com/video/play/5874739>



Medicaid expansion is a passionate and divisive debate in Utah.

The Gang of 6 was created to continue negotiations after two bills failed in the General Session.

Friday, the group announced consensus on a framework for moving forward.

"A plan that I think is much better and much improved over the different plans that we have been talking about before and I think that's what made it worth while," said Speaker of the House, Greg Hughes, ( R ) Draper.

Hughes says the proposal would provide coverage for Utahns who live at or below 138% of the federal poverty level.

It protects the state against unpredictable future costs by having hospitals, pharmacies and other providers who benefit from Medicaid dollars pay their share.

"I think we protect the budget in doing it this way and I think it's a mechanism that can bring the needed health care to those that don't have it," said Hughes.

Advocates for Medicaid expansion like that it would close the coverage gap and take advantage of the full federal match.

"Getting all the major players to be at the same table and agree on the right match rate and the right number of people covered was the biggest hurdle. That is something that we weren't able to accomplish before," said Jason Stevenson with Utah Health Policy Project.

Stevenson says this is a good sign of progress, but they'll be keeping a close eye as the



details unfold.

"We also need to know what kind of coverage this is. We want it to be quality, affordable health coverage," said Stevenson.

Hughes says it is the right solution for Utah, that others will follow.

"I think we are coming to something that could potentially be a template for other states," said Hughes.

The Gang of 6 will meet with stake holders and policy makers in the coming weeks to hammer out the details.

The federal government has to sign off on the plan as well, so does the state legislature.

