UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

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News Release

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Brief Statement on Dr. David Sundwalls Resignation from Helm of Utah Department of Health

We are certainly sorry to see him go, given his record of achievement on issues dear to health care advocates. The recession and Medicaid caseload growth left him with little room to maneuver on his many laudable and ambitious goals. That he was able nonetheless to implement a preferred drug list (saving Medicaid millions every year), permanently open CHIP for uninsured kids, and make significant investments in the state's public health and health IT infrastructure speaks volumes about what we're giving up with David's resignation.

But no doubt our loss will be the MACPAC's gain. The Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission was formed by Congress in 2009 to review Medicaid and CHIP policies affecting children's access to services and make recommendations each year. It will broadly examine issues affecting Medicaid and CHIP, including payment methodologies, delivery system reforms and much needed quality improvements. These are the very challenges that will help Utah get underneath its Medicaid financing and quality challenges.

The MACPAC will benefit from Dr. Sundwall's deeper involvement, though at this point it's difficult to gauge how influential the MACPAC's recommendations will be. Based on his achievements at the health department, we fully support Dr. Sundwall and MACPAC and the important work they will be doing to ensure improved access to care for the millions of Americans (and hundreds of thousands of Utahns) who rely on Medicaid and CHIP.

For further reaction, please contact: Judi Hilman, Executive Director, UHPP (statement source): 801-870-3887
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