



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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### *I Am the Face of Health Reform...*

### UHPP Storybank to Provide Reality Check at November 4 Utah Health Forum

Salt Lake City-Ten individuals from the Utah Health Policy Project's [Storybank](#) will be on hand to provide a practical, first-person perspective on the presentations at United Way/ Chamber's [Utah Health Forum](#) this Wednesday 8:00 AM-4:00 PM at the Salt Palace. The storytellers (and UHPP staff, Board trustees, and volunteers) will be wearing big gold stickers to identify themselves to reporters and panelists. **Reporters will have an opportunity to meet all of the storytellers 8:00-8:30 AM in Room 255 of the Salt Palace** and will be encouraged to ask the storytellers questions throughout the day.

*"This is about real families and our ability to afford medically necessary, cost-effective health care. I plan to weigh in on the discussions throughout the day—the stakes are just too high and the opportunities to reform health care right now too great for me not to be part of this,"* says Dan Draney from Ogden.

Wednesday's Forum will be focused primarily on state health reform, with only 1 out of 12 topics devoted exclusively to national health reform. *"If you could isolate one key difference between state health reforms and the proposed national reform it's the attention to making decent coverage affordable,"* notes Judi Hilman, Executive Director of the UHPP. *"There are other notable differences, of course (risk pooling, a basic benefit standard, an individual mandate), but this is the most prominent and telltale difference which ultimately structures all the others."* *We're grateful for the cooperation of the United Way and Chamber for making it easier for the storytellers to help Forum participants understand the practical importance of this and other critical elements of reform."*



Karlene works for a small nonprofit that simply cannot afford to provide coverage to their employees. Unfortunately, Karlene can't afford coverage on her own, and this is why she is uninsured. A few years ago, she came down with a severe case of pneumonia and was admitted to the hospital for 4 days. She was enrolled in the state's Primary Care Network, but had no hospital coverage. Thus, Karlene faced thousands of dollars in health care bills. Thankfully, the hospital donated much of the care, but now Karlene avoids getting care she needs because of her concern about the cost. Of course, this impacts her productivity at work as it takes her longer to recover when she gets sick. *"I want to have health insurance, but I just can't afford it! National health reform will expand affordable coverage to me and several hundred-thousand Utahns like me."*



Trent Maw, President and Founder of Linqix, may lose one of his best employees over the need for affordable insurance. *“It is a tough situation,”* says Trent. *“I would like to offer health insurance, but we don’t because we just can’t afford it.” I understand this employee’s need to be covered, but it will be hard to replace him.* In operation for 6 years, Linqix has 3 full time and 4 full time employees. *“We just haven’t crossed the threshold to where we can provide health benefits,”* explains Trent, who along with all of the other storytellers, supports national health reform with plenty of room for state innovation.

Unfortunately, Linqix is not alone, according to the UHPP. Too many Utah small businesses are facing similarly tough situations. Employers and employees are both hurt when health insurance is not affordable.

*“Congress and our state legislature need to enact comprehensive, bold health care reforms this year. Small businesses are the foundation of our economy. Nationally, small businesses provide 79% of all net new jobs. We cannot lead the way to economic recovery—as we must—without immediate, lasting relief from rising health care costs,”* says Steve Hatch of Hatch Family Chocolates, a member of the UHPP Board of Trustees.

*The storytellers and UHPP staff, Board, and volunteers will have 2 tables near the front of the lunch. They will be prepared to comment also on the lunchtime keynote speakers, Governor Gary Herbert and House Speaker David Clark. To get in touch with any of the storytellers or Board members at any point during the day, please contact Jessica Kendrick of the UHPP: (801) 712-4354.*

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