

Health Care Issue Group Challenging Herbert's "Healthy Utah" Plan

Audio: http://cpa.ds.npr.org/kuer/audio/2014/11/WEB_UNHEALTHY_DB_111414.mp3

Link: <http://kuer.org/post/health-care-issue-group-challenging-herberts-healthy-utah-plan>

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By [Dan Bammes](#)

The group working to stop Governor Gary Herbert's [Healthy Utah](#) plan has been fighting similar battles in other states. The [Foundation for Government Accountability](#) is hoping to defeat the plan when it goes to the Utah legislature.



The Foundation for Government Accountability has been sending out direct mail pieces and advertising on Facebook. Its link goes to a website called [UnhealthyUtah.com](#) which urges Utah residents to oppose what it calls a "Medicaid welfare expansion."



Jason Stevenson with the Utah Health Policy Project says FGA has been active in fighting several proposed alternatives to the expansion of Medicaid

Stevenson tells KUER, "Utah isn't the first state they've targeted. They've been active in Arkansas and in Indiana, trying to stop efforts to bring people insurance in those states."

Foundation Research Director Jonathan Ingram says it doesn't matter much what Governor Herbert calls it.

"This is a Medicaid expansion," Ingram tells KUER. "You're providing Medicaid enrollees with Medicaid benefits and limits on Medicaid cost sharing. There are some window dressings that the governor has proposed, but both the federal government and the state agree that this is Medicaid expansion under Obamacare."

Governor Herbert counters, "That's just patently false. I don't want to expand Obamacare. I've never proposed an expansion of Obamacare."

At the conclusion of his monthly news conference yesterday, Herbert said Healthy Utah is a way for Utahns to benefit from the hundreds of millions of dollars they're paying in federal taxes to subsidize health care.

"We can either leave it there and they spend it however they see fit subsidizing other states," Herbert said. "We get no benefit. We could do Medicaid expansion. That's 258-million dollars. Or, I've said there's a third alternative, which is what we've been negotiating."

The Foundation for Government Accountability is a tax-exempt political issue group that is not required to disclose its donors. As of midday on Friday, it wasn't identified as the sponsor of the Facebook ads or on the UnhealthyUtah.com website.