

Utahns for Sustainable Health Reform **U-SHARE**

Working toward affordable, high-quality health care for all Utahns.

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HEALTH REFORM TASK FORCE BILLS A FIRST STEP

U-SHARE APPLAUDS ACTION TOWARD REFORM AND REMINDS LEGISLATORS MANY MORE STEPS NEEDED

SALT LAKE CITY – Utahns for Sustainable Health Reform (U-SHARE) applauds the passage of three health reform bills today by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. “We’re pleased that the health system reform effort is moving forward. The proposals passed by the House and today the Senate Health and Human Services Committee hopefully will address aspects of the health insurance piece of the puzzle and extend basic coverage to some uncovered people,” said Michael Stapley, President and C.E.O of Deseret Mutual and a member of U-SHARE, a broad coalition of organizations and individuals focused on meaningful, comprehensive health system reform for Utah.

Several positive proposals were eliminated from the current House bills. U-SHARE would like to see the use of *modified community rating* (wherein individuals can no longer be charged higher premiums because of health status) instead of *rate bands* (group-specific ratings) to set premiums for *all* markets, a move toward evidence-based medicine for treatment standards, and a basic health care plan that provides truly affordable coverage as this effort moves forward.

U-SHARE heartily commends House Speaker Rep. Dave Clark, for the role he has played in skillfully shepherding the health reform process; the coalition also agrees with him when he says that the current bills move the effort forward to the 20-yard line. “We have made progress and we are thankful for that,” Michael Stapley

said. “But the fact remains we have 80 yards to go and we don’t have any time for fumbles or interceptions. We’re committed as a coalition to working closely with Speaker Clark to moving the ball down the field as far and as quickly as possible.”

U-SHARE members include more than 50 organizations and individuals united in the cause of working toward affordable, high-quality health care for all Utahns. The coalition has developed a set of principles to help guide decision-makers to expand access to health care, improve quality and contain costs.

Organized in four areas, they are:

Strengthen Personal and Shared Responsibility

1. Share cost and risk among employers, providers, insurers, government and individuals.
2. Maximize personal responsibility for health and welfare.
3. Encourage individuals to seek health care at the right time and place.

Ensure Affordability and Access to Care

1. Provide affordable access to care and coverage for Utahns.
2. Provide subsidies for those who are unable to afford coverage and care.
3. Promote benefit packages that cover essential services including primary and preventive care, specialty care, pharmacy, mental health and inpatient hospital services.
4. Support affordable access to medically necessary, cost-effective health care services.
5. Optimize public programs such as Medicaid, CHIP and the Utah Premium Partnership.
6. Invest more in the state’s primary care infrastructure.
7. Work to eliminate disparities in health access, coverage and outcomes.

Align Treatment and Financing Incentives with Evidence-Based Medicine

1. Use health information technology to improve information flow and health outcomes.
2. Create a more transparent system for users.
3. Promote best practices in care delivery.

Focus on Wellness and Prevention

1. Encourage wellness and disease prevention through increased health education and incentives to stay healthy.
2. Promote appropriate use of primary and preventive care as the cornerstone for a healthy population.

Any organization or individual is welcome to join U-SHARE if they agree with these guiding principles. U-SHARE is dedicated to finding consensus among disparate groups working to bring comprehensive, innovative health reform to Utah. More information is available at www.ushare-utah.org or by calling 801.433.2299.

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