

**MINUTES OF THE
ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND COVERAGE TASK FORCE**

Friday, May 18, 2001 - 9:00 a.m. - Room 403 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. Peter Knudson, Senate Chair
Rep. Rebecca Lockhart, House Chair
Sen. D. Chris Buttars
Sen. Paula Julander
Rep. Trisha Beck
Rep. Jim Ferrin
Rep. J. Morgan Philpot
Mr. Merwin U. Stewart

Members Excused:

Rep. David Litvack
Mr. Rod L. Betit

Staff Present:

Mr. J. Wayne Lewis,
Research Analyst
Ms. Catherine Dupont,
Associate General Counsel
Ms. Jennifer Markham,
Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present and a copy of materials distributed in the meeting are on file in the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel.

1. Call to Order

Chair Knudson called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Members of the Task Force and visitors were requested by Chair Knudson to introduce themselves.

Chair Knudson reviewed S.B. 121, "Access to Health Care and Coverage Task Force."

Ms. Catherine Dupont, Associate General Counsel, emphasized the task force study requirements in S.B. 121 and identified the goals of the meeting: (1) identify the uninsured, (2) identify what we are trying to target, (3) identify other efforts currently undertaken, and (4) develop a mission statement.

2. Presentation: Brief History of Health Care Reform in Utah

Mr. J. Wayne Lewis reviewed a brief history of health care reform in Utah. "Summary of Initiatives to Improve Access to Health Care 1982-1994," was a collection of health initiatives over a 12-year period and was included in the agenda packet.

Ms. Roberta Hertzberg, former Health Policy Commission member, discussed the handout "Health Policy Under the Health Policy Commission 1994-2000."

Mr. Bill Jeffery, former Health Policy Commission staff member, stated that only several hundred people in Utah took advantage of the medical savings accounts prior to Federal legislation. After the federal legislation was enacted, tax payers were unable to take advantage of

both the federal and state deductions for the savings accounts. Most people chose the federal deduction and the state medical accounts dropped to 5 - 10 users.

3. Addressing the Issue of the Uninsured in Utah: Identifying the Uninsured

Mr. Robert T. Rolfs, Director, Center for Health Data, Utah Department of Health, explained "Overview of Health Insurance Coverage in Utah" which was distributed in the agenda packet to the committee.

Ms. Judi Hilman, Health Care Advocate, Utah Issues, discussed "Who are Utah's Low - Income Uninsured?" A copy of her presentation was distributed in the agenda packet to task force members. Ms. Hilman also provided copies of Utah Issues Summary and Highlights Newsletter, March 2001.

Mr. Ron Casper, Spokesperson, National Federation of Independent Businesses, stated that 60% of the uninsured in Utah are either owners or employees of small businesses with less than 100 employees. He said the central issue is cost, and employees are picking up more of the cost of premiums. He said health care cost increased three times more than wages during 1983-88.

Mr. Larry Bunkall, private citizen, stated he believed there were two solutions to the health care dilemma: (1) require government to provide health care or (2) require government stop trying to interfere with providing health care.

4. Concurrent Efforts to Study the Uninsured in Utah: Department of Health HRSA Grant

Mr. Chad J. Westover, Director, Covering the Uninsured 2002, discussed the handouts with the agenda materials, "HHS News," "Covering the Uninsured in 2002," "Grant Structure," and "Guiding Principles."

5. Definition of Task Force Objectives: Mission of the Task Force

MOTION: Rep. Lockhart moved to approve the mission statement as follows: The Access to Health Care and Coverage Task Force will study and recommend cost effective proposals to expand access to health care and health insurance coverage for all Utahns. These proposals will reflect strategies which strike an appropriate balance between private, market oriented solutions and public support options. The motion passed unanimously, with Sen. Julander absent for the vote.

6. Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2001 Interim - Chairs

The next meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2001, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. A proposed meeting schedule for the summer will be provided at the June 8 meeting.

7. Adjourn

MOTION: Sen. Buttars moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 p.m. The motion passed unanimously, with Sen. Julander absent for the vote.

