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## THE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Thursday, November 19, 2009

This update is published weekly during the General Session and monthly during the Interim and Special Sessions.

### Alerts and News from the Hill

#### Executive Appropriations

The Governor's Office of Budget released a report on how the state plans to implement the FY2011 base budget cuts. The picture is not pretty for critical health and human services programs. Medicaid providers, for example, are scheduled to experience significant reductions in their reimbursement rates, up to 20% for some. The report notes that these reductions could have significant impact on Medicaid recipients ability to access care.

#### Real Estate Transfer Tax

The Holy Grail of housing trust fund revenue sources - the real estate transfer tax - was discussed yesterday in the Revenue and Tax Interim Committee. The committee looked at the Joint Resolution Prohibiting Property Transfer Tax. This resolution does just what it says, including looking for an amendment to the Utah Constitution. Such a prohibition will tie future legislators' hands, taking away a potential (affordable housing) funding source. This resolution is included in a bill requiring disclosure of real estate sales prices. While the bill passed unanimously out of committee, the resolution was not voted on. Several committee members expressed concern about language in the resolution and one member was opposed to the resolution in general. We still have a lot of work to do: the resolution will go before a

constitutional committee and will likely be heard from again during the legislative session.

### **Health System Reform Taskforce**

Early reports on the state's Health Exchange are not good. Health plans on the exchange are proving to be more expensive than off the exchange. Consumer advocates believe this is largely due to how insurance companies handle risk. The risk pools for plans on the exchange are smaller and more volatile than plans offered the exchange. Speaker Dave Clark appears to recognize this and threatened that if plans on the exchange do not become more affordable, he will explore requiring insurance companies to "community rate," which means that plans would have to charge everyone the same amount regardless of health history.

### **Happenings at HUD: the National Housing Trust Fund, Section 8 vouchers and more**



This week Community Action Partnership of Utah met with Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan.

Secretary Donovan reassured us the National Housing Trusty Fund would be funded in the next budget to a tune of \$1 billion. How much of that money will be coming Utah's way? We'll know by early December when the funding formula is published in the Federal Register.

The Secretary also stated that there would be increased support in the FY2011 budget for Section 8 vouchers and until that time there would be continued support and problem solving.

Secretary Donovan is well aware of the negative public opinion of HUD, saying that "If we can't fix HUD now we will never be able to fix it." He added that "it will be the responsibility of HUD senior staff and other advocates to do this... we all need to act now." He continued with a great amount of optimism about HUDs future. "For eight years we have been playing defense with housing programs" he said. "We are now shifting that thinking to make innovative changes in the way HUD works internally and with the public."

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## Advocate's Calendar

The Family Investment Coalition's Advocate's Caucus will be held every Legislative Interim Session (and any Special Sessions) in the cafeteria in the Senate (East) Building on Wednesdays from 12:30 pm until 1:30 pm. We will discuss our legislative agendas, talk about items of interest, and collaborate with other advocates.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## Be an Advocate

Keep informed: all legislative agendas and audio of committee meetings are available [here](#).

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