



## News Release

**For Immediate Release:**  
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**Media Contact:**  
Stephen P. McDonald  
Public Information Office  
(801) 538-7099

### **Summit for Health Insurance Coverage for the Uninsured Announced**

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Utah Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., is pleased to announce the Summit for Health Insurance Coverage for the Uninsured. The summit will address one of the most pressing health issues facing the state.

An estimated 250,000 Utahns do not have health insurance. “The Summit is very timely with the recent release of new figures showing a slight increase in the number of people in Utah without health insurance,” says Governor Huntsman. “The experts at the Summit will discuss the scope of the problem and potential solutions.”

Utah’s uninsured rate has risen slightly from 9.1 percent in 2003 to 10.2 percent in 2004, according to the Utah Department of Health’s (UDOH) Health Status Survey. “This translates to about 35,000 additional Utahns without health insurance,” says David Sundwall, M.D., Executive Director, UDOH. “Though Utah’s uninsured rate is rising more slowly than other states, the increase is a concern.”

“During the course of a year, an uninsured person receives half as much care as a privately insured person,” says Richard J. Sperry, M.D., Ph. D., Director, Governor Scott M. Matheson Center for Health Care Studies. “We are pleased to participate in this Summit and to explore ways to provide health insurance coverage to more Utahns.”

Utah has a long history of working to provide health insurance coverage to its citizens. Both the executive and legislative branches of Utah’s government have supported the passage of legislation to provide coverage for the uninsured. The best example of these efforts is Utah’s Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which began in 1998.

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## **Page 2 of 2 – Summit for Health Insurance Coverage for the Uninsured Announced**

In 2005, the Utah State Legislature passed House Bill 114, appropriating \$3.3 million additional dollars to expand CHIP. This funding will allow CHIP to cover another 12,000 children, increasing the average enrollment to 40,000.

The UDOH currently provides medical care coverage to almost 225,000 Utahns through Medicaid, CHIP, and the Primary Care Network. “Without state programs that provide medical care coverage, Utah’s uninsured rate would probably double,” says Governor Huntsman.

“We are pleased to co-sponsor a summit to explore public, private and community options to provide health coverage to more Utahns,” says D. Kent Michie, Commissioner of Insurance, Utah Insurance Department.

Utah’s Summit on Health Coverage for the Uninsured is planned for May 3, 2005, and will be held at the Huntsman Cancer Institute auditorium. The Summit is a partnership between the Governor’s Office, the Utah Department of Insurance, and the Governor Scott M. Matheson Center for Health Care Studies at the University of Utah. For more information, visit [www.health.utah.gov](http://www.health.utah.gov).

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*