



News Release

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Media Contact:
Kolbi Young
PR and Marketing Coordinator
kolbiyoung@utah.gov/801.538.6847

UDOH Unveils CHIP Outreach Campaign

Department takes message on the road to enroll more children with new funding

(Salt Lake City, Utah) ó Utah Lieutenant Governor Gary Herbert and the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) held a joint press conference today announcing a new campaign to get eligible children from all corners of the state enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Beginning today, outreach workers will hit the road in a newly-designed CHIP van to find and sign up as many children as possible.

Local events have been organized in every Utah county, where parents of eligible children will get one-on-one information about benefits, and be able to apply on-site for coverage. The CHIP Van Tour is a key component of the UDOH "Covering Utah's Children" media campaign, running now through 2008.

The van campaign was developed to provide a recognizable symbol of the state's commitment to covering as many uninsured children as possible. The Legislature's approval of new funding this spring will allow more children to receive CHIP benefits than ever before. Lt. Gov. Herbert and UDOH are united in their commitment to getting Utah children the critical health care they need.

“Utah is doing very well economically,” said Lt. Gov. Herbert. “We have invested in our schools and teachers, and we have invested in programs to strengthen our economy to attract new employers to Utah. CHIP is also a great investment in Utah's future,” he added. “Society as a whole benefits if we have healthy children; they perform better in school and are better equipped to learn. And parents are able to rest easier knowing their children will be cared for in case of illness or injury.”

UDOH Director Dr. David Sundwall is enthusiastic about the tour. “We're thrilled to be taking our message on the road to show families how easy it is to sign up for CHIP and begin receiving benefits,” Sundwall said.

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“The great thing about CHIP is it rescues families during unexpected hard times, allowing them to get their finances back on track without the stress and worry that come when your children are uninsured,” he added.

Utah mom Beatrice Jensen knows firsthand how CHIP can help. In 2006, Jensen’s husband died of ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s Disease, leaving her and her five children without health insurance. “I am so grateful that during that time of need, CHIP helped ease my worries by providing my children the health care coverage they needed,” Jensen said. After one year of CHIP coverage, Jensen has been able to once again provide private insurance for her family.

CHIP is funded jointly by the federal and state governments. To receive CHIP, children must qualify based on family size and household income. For example, a family of four earning up to \$41,300 a year may be eligible. In addition, children must be younger than 19, U.S. citizens or legal residents, and not currently covered by health insurance. Families can apply online, have an application mailed to them, or apply in person at the CHIP van or local eligibility office. Once enrolled, families may be required to pay premiums of up to \$60 every three months. Premiums and co-pays for services make it possible for CHIP to insure more children.

Current CHIP enrollment stands at 23,692 children. Since 1998, more than 114,000 Utah kids have been helped by the program. The total number of children who can be covered by CHIP at any one time is determined by how many enroll, how many leave the program, and available funding. With the new funding, CHIP can insure approximately 45,000 children over the next fiscal year.

The “Covering Utah’s Children” media campaign will run on TV and radio through 2008. Watch and listen for more information about the CHIP Van Tour. CHIP enrollment information will continue to be distributed through schools, childcare agencies, and advocacy groups. Learn more about the CHIP Van Tour by calling 1-877-KIDS-NOW, or visit www.health.utah.gov/chip for a detailed list of event locations, dates, and times.

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