



AUCH

ASSOCIATION FOR UTAH COMMUNITY HEALTH

MEMBERS

Bear Lake Community Health Center, Inc.

Carbon Medical Services Association, Inc.

Community Health Centers, Inc.

Enterprise Valley Medical Clinic

Family Healthcare

Green River Medical Center

Midtown Community Health Center

Mountainlands Family Health Center

Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah

Planned Parenthood Association of Utah

Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake

Utah Navajo Health System, Inc.

Utah Partners for Health

Wasatch Homeless Health Care, Inc.

Wayne Community Health Centers, Inc.

AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Health Clinics of Utah

Health Choice Network Utah

Odyssey House– Martindale Clinic

People's Health Clinic

October 2, 2015

Utah State Legislature
Health Reform Task Force
350 North State Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Re: Utah Access Plus

Chairmen Christensen, Dunnigan and Members of the Task Force:

The Association for Utah Community Health remains supportive of reaching a Utah solution for Medicaid expansion. We believe that the Utah Access Plus model has many positive aspects, but we are opposed to the proposed funding mechanism – particularly taxing individual licensed providers.

Health Centers cover the licensing fees of their employed providers, as is common practice in most healthcare systems. Implementing a provider tax would not impose a financial hardship on the Health Centers as the financial benefit of receiving reimbursement for services rendered far outweighs the proposed tax – especially when the vast majority of our uninsured patients would gain coverage under an expansion. However, we strongly believe that adding an assessment to existing licensing fees of healthcare professionals is bad public policy and sets a highly undesirable precedent. Not all providers will benefit from a Medicaid expansion, and many retired providers who currently volunteer their services within the safety-net may choose to no longer maintain their licensure due to the proposed tax.

Covering the gap remains the ultimate goal and is essential to a more productive and healthy Utah. AUCH members provide high-quality comprehensive primary and preventive care to more than 150,000 patients annually – the majority of whom are currently uninsured and low-income. We know first-hand that having health insurance leads to better health and wellness. Our patients who have health insurance are much more likely to utilize primary and preventive care than our uninsured patients, even though the uninsured patients qualify for nominal fee visits on our sliding fee scale (e.g. \$20 office visit). Due to very real economic hardships and pressures, low-income uninsured patients forgo primary care, often waiting until preventable conditions require expensive and extensive care, including hospitalization.

We are appreciative of the efforts to date, but firmly believe that an alternative funding solution must be found.

Sincerely,

Alan Pruhs,
Executive Director