Fixing Health Care: What’s Next?
Response by Utah Representative Jim Dunnigan
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• For the past year, Utah has sought a waiver to expand Medicaid eligibility at the traditional reimbursement rate — not the ACA’s enhanced rate — to cover those most in need. Our waiver targets low income adults who don’t have children, in this order:
  ➢ those who are chronically homeless;
  ➢ those who need substance misuse or mental health services and are involved with the criminal justice system; and
  ➢ those outside the criminal justice system who need substance misuse or mental health services.

• Under the new administration, we are also seeking approval for enrollment limits, a five-year lifetime limit, a work requirement, higher-copays for non-emergent use of an emergency department, elimination of presumptive eligibility, and authorization to adjust eligibility criteria for targeted groups by state rule rather than by an amendment to the waiver.

• This waiver is a critical piece in our effort to provide treatment rather than jail beds to many of our criminal offenders. It’s also a model of how to expand Medicaid in a measured and sustainable way that recognizes budgetary realities.

• HHS can help Utah and other states expand Medicaid by making it easier for states to:
  ➢ expand the program to those most in need;
  ➢ adjust eligibility and benefits to fit within available state revenues; and
  ➢ impose cost sharing requirements that incentivize responsible use of services.

• I encourage HHS to approve Utah’s waiver and other waivers like it.