



For Immediate Release

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Salt Lake City, UT – The United States Senate Committee on Finance held a hearing on Medicaid today in Salt Lake City, chaired by Utah Senator Orrin Hatch. Senator Hatch chose a panel that included only Republican governors and rejected a request that the hearing include advocates for Utahns who depend on Medicaid to get the health care they need. Voices for Utah Children Executive Director, Karen Crompton, issued the following statement in response:

“Today, Senator Hatch and the Senate Finance Committee did a disservice to Utah children and families, by holding a hearing on an issue that affects them every day but excluding them from the conversation.

Medicaid has played a critical role in Utah's – and America's – success story in covering uninsured kids, but the Senator and the Committee ignored the value Medicaid delivers every day. They also ignored the reality that Medicaid costs are driven by skyrocketing health care costs and a bad economy – problems for which neither the senators nor the governors offered real solutions. However, despite increasing health care costs and 35% enrollment growth since the beginning of the great recession in 2007, Medicaid as a share of Utah's state spending has been stable for the last several years, with Utah spending less than 6% of state funds on the program.

We have made enormous progress toward the goal of improving coverage and access for children. Senator Hatch and Governor Herbert should reject ideas that move Utah backwards and put kids' health at risk. They should insist on an honest dialogue with the people of Utah about health care -- starting with a hearing that includes a chance for regular people to share their stories about Medicaid's value.”

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Voices for Utah Children is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to ensure that all children are safe and healthy, ready for school, and live in families that can provide for their needs and make investments in their future.