

UTAH HEALTH CARE SOLUTIONS POLICY CONFERENCE

January 15, 2025, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Cleone Peterson Eccles Alumni House

155 South Central Campus Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84112



AGENDA

- 8:00 am** Check-In and Breakfast
- 9:00 am** Keynote: Jennifer Strohecker, State Medicaid Director
- 10:00 am** Legislative Panel
- 11:00 am** Health-Related Social Needs Panel
- 12:00 pm** Conclusion and Networking Lunch

Utah Health Policy Project (UHPP) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advancing sustainable health care solutions for underserved Utahns through better access, education, and public policy. Since 2006, UHPP has worked hard to develop solutions to create a health system that provides better access to higher quality health care at a lower cost. UHPP prides itself on being an open resource for the public, community leaders, the media, businesses, health care providers, and policymakers.

Take Care Utah (TCU) is a program of UHPP that helps Utahns access health insurance coverage and navigate the health care system. TCU aims to reduce barriers to health access through hands-on application assistance and advocacy. The TCU team offers direct services free of charge to assist with Medicaid/CHIP applications, Marketplace support, case advocacy, community education, and more.

UHPP 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPONSORS



Select
Health



MOLINA[®]
HEALTHCARE



Intermountain
Health

HEALTH | CHOICE
UTAH



HEALTH PLANS
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

CHG[®]
Healthcare



agentboost[®]
MARKETING



CAMBIA[™]
health foundation

FIRST STEP
HOUSE

Comagine
Health



AUCH
ASSOCIATION FOR UTAH COMMUNITY HEALTH

Optum



CommonSpirit

UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT



Matt Slonaker has been the Executive Director of UHPP since 2013. He attended the University of Montana, where he pursued his passion for policy and government. Matt also completed a law degree, where he solidified his interest in policy reform. After completing law school, Matt joined Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer's budget team, assuming the role of economist and tax policy analyst. Matt relocated to Washington, D.C., where he served as a nonprofit policy adviser and outreach coordinator for Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus. Matt later moved to New York City to work at Care for the Homeless. His role involved coordinating a coalition of healthcare providers focused on serving the homeless population amidst significant changes to state Medicaid policy. Matt's commitment to improving healthcare extended to Utah, where he played a pivotal role as a founding organizer of the successful Proposition 3 campaign to expand Medicaid. With his dedicated team and community partners, he continues to work tirelessly to develop innovative strategies that strengthen Utah's healthcare system. Matt has a second job meeting the demands of his two little girls who seem to have an endless appetite for his attention. He doesn't mind.



KEYNOTE



**Jennifer Strohecker | Integrated Healthcare Division
Director and State Medicaid Director, Utah
Department of Health and Human Services**

Jennifer Strohecker, PharmD, has served as the Director of the Division of Integrated Healthcare and State Medicaid Director since 2022. She has worked for the Medicaid agency since 2018, and has served in several positions including the State Pharmacy Director.

Since becoming Medicaid Director, she has overseen a complete system implementation of a modernized Medicaid claims billing system, navigated Medicaid unwinding activities for Utahns enrolled in Medicaid, and implemented the first value based performance program with accountable care organizations. Jennifer is passionate about improving healthcare delivery and the quality of care for Medicaid members.

Keynote Speaker sponsored by Molina Healthcare.

LEGISLATIVE PANEL

As the 2025 Utah Legislative Session begins on January 21st, lawmakers will address many important health policy issues facing Utahns. Potential topics that may be addressed during this session include Medicaid funding, healthcare cost/affordability, public health, mental and behavioral health, medical debt, vaccinations, and water fluoridation. This panel is an opportunity for legislators from both the House and the Senate to discuss their health policy priorities for the session and other potential legislative work that needs to be done to improve healthcare access and affordability in the state of Utah. **Panel sponsored by Intermountain Healthcare and Select Health.**

Moderator



Jim Dunnigan | Representative - Utah District 36

Representative Dunnigan has served in the Utah State Legislature since 2003. He currently serves on the Criminal Justice Appropriations Subcommittee and the House Business and Labor Committee. He has previously served on the Taylorsville City Council. Rep. Dunnigan has a degree in Business Management from the University of Utah and works as an insurance agency owner.

LEGISLATIVE PANEL



Luz Escamilla | Senator - Utah District 10

Senator Escamilla began her service in the Utah Legislature in January 2009. She currently serves as the Senate Minority Leader and is on several committees including the Executive Appropriations Committee and Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Sen. Escamilla received her degree in Business Marketing from the University of Utah as well as an MPA. She works professionally as a banker and business consultant.



Raymond Ward | Representative - Utah District 19

Representative Ward was elected to serve District 19 in 2014, representing both Bountiful and West Bountiful. In addition, he is a family physician in private practice serving older patients and adults struggling with addiction issues. Throughout his service, he has advocated for the disabled, water conservation of the Great Salt Lake, housing affordability, and supporting pregnant women struggling with addiction and other risk factors.

LEGISLATIVE PANEL



Jen Plumb | Senator - Utah District 9

Dr. Plumb is a Utah native, born in Salt Lake City. She attended UCLA for her undergraduate training and went on to obtain her Master of Public Health and MD degrees at the University of Utah. After that, she went off to complete her medical residency training in Pediatrics at Rileys Children's Hospital/Indiana University and her Pediatric Emergency Medicine here at Primary Children's Hospital. In addition to seeing patients in the pediatric ER, Dr. Plumb is very active in our community as an advocate for issues surrounding substance use, abuse, and prevention. Dr. Plumb is also a proud mother to an amazing transgender daughter and an advocate for our transgender youth and community members.



Steve Eliason | Representative - Utah District 43

Representative Steve Eliason has served in the Utah State Legislature since January 1, 2011. He serves on the House Health and Human Services Committee and Utah Behavioral Health Legislative Policy Committee. He has passed several bills relating to suicide prevention and addressing mental health challenges. He has a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Utah and works for the University of Utah Hospital as a senior director.

HEALTH-RELATED SOCIAL NEEDS PANEL

Health-related social needs (HRSN) are the social and economic conditions that affect an individual's ability to maintain their health and well-being. Utahns who experience unstable housing, food insecurity, difficulties accessing care (including oral health care), or recidivism are at an increased risk for various negative health outcomes. A vital step in maintaining health is adequate healthcare coverage. Many low-income Utahns forgo necessary medical treatments and medications to afford other basic needs, such as food and rent. Meanwhile, others may be sacrificing important basic needs to pay hefty medical bills. This panel includes experts from behavioral and mental health, oral health, and food insecurity to discuss ways to improve access to care for all Utahns. **Panel sponsored by U of U Health Plans.**

Moderator



RyLee Curtis | Community Engagement Director, U of U Health

RyLee has years of experience working with health policy and conducting community outreach. She worked with Medicaid policy for many years before shifting to community engagement efforts. As the Director of Community Engagement at the University of Utah, she leads University Hospital's Healthcare Anchor Institution work to address social determinants of health. She received a master's in Public Policy from the University of Utah.

HEALTH-RELATED SOCIAL NEEDS PANEL



Tim Whalen | Director of Behavioral Health Services, Salt Lake County

Tim Whalen has an extensive background in serving the behavioral needs of Salt Lake County residents and has worked for Salt Lake County since 1997. He has advanced programs including community mental health crisis services, provided oversight to Salt Lake County's contract provider network which deliver mental health services to those under Medicaid, and served as a voice for vulnerable populations throughout his career.



Kevin Curtis | Crisis Services Director at Huntsman Mental Health Institute

Kevin Curtis, LCSW, has worked in the mental health field for 19 years in clinical and administrative capacities. He is passionate about creating efficient, evidence-based, and human-centered access to mental health care for all in crisis. He is the operational administrator for the Huntsman Mental Health Institute Crisis Care Center, opening March 2025 in South Salt Lake.

HEALTH-RELATED SOCIAL NEEDS PANEL



James Bekker, DMD | University of Utah School of Dentistry

Dr. James Bekker, DMD is a Pediatric Dentist with many years of pediatric private practice in both urban and rural settings, having practiced in Salt Lake City in an urban setting and in Carbon County, Utah in a rural setting. He has served in several important leadership roles in the University of Utah School of Dentistry (UUSOD) since its origin, including the Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, which included the initial planning and development for the UUSOD in 2013. Dr. Bekker is now serving as Associate Dean for Professional, Community, and Strategic Relations with direct oversight for the UUSOD Associated Provider network for Medicaid.



Gina Cornia | Executive Director, Utahns Against Hunger

Since 2001, Gina has served as the Director of Utahns Against Hunger. She was introduced to the work of this organization while she was volunteering with them at the Bennion Center through the University of Utah. Previously, she worked with welfare policy at Utah Issues for five years. She has worked with state and federal elected officials on issues of hunger and poverty for 15 years.

HEALTH CARE SOLUTION MAKER AWARD

Utah Health Policy Project thanks Pat for all of his contributions to its mission and to the community.



Patrick J. Fleming has worked in human services for over 35 years in a variety of capacities including program management, direct services, business management, and policy development. He has worked at the federal level, state level, the county level, and for private nonprofit agencies including the Center for Family Development here in Salt Lake City and a rural Head Start Program in Michigan. For the past 25 years, Fleming has worked almost exclusively in the field of behavioral health disorders treatment and prevention. He served as the director of the Salt Lake County Division of Behavioral Health Services until his retirement in January 2015. Fleming has also served in several professional organizations at the national level, most recently as the President of the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Disability Directors which is the behavioral health affiliate of NACo. He served as the board chair of the Utah Health Policy Project for three years and as chair of the Utah Substance Use and Mental Health Services Advisory Council.

Utah Health Policy Project

2369 West Orton Circle, Suite 20
West Valley City, UT 84119

action@healthpolicyproject.org

