



News Release

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Utah Department of Health Offers 200,000 in Grants to Reach the Medically Underserved

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH), in partnership with Utah Issues, would like to invite Utah’s community organizations to apply for the Health Access Mini-Grants Program for Families with Children. These grants are intended to help reach and enroll low-income families who qualify for Medicaid and the Child Health Insurance Plan (CHIP).

The UDOH will award 10 grants, each valued at up to \$20,000. The application deadline is 5 p.m. on November 8, 2000. The grants will begin on January 1, 2001, and will run for one year. The UDOH has the option of renewing successful projects for a second year. The mini-grants will be funded through Utah’s remaining \$1.2 million share of the Federal/State Medicaid-Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Delinking Funds; \$500 million was set aside for states to maintain eligibility for Medicaid through the transition from welfare to work. Before 1996, eligibility for Medicaid was automatically “linked” to eligibility for cash assistance. Once these programs became “delinked” it became necessary to base Medicaid eligibility on income levels.

“Maintaining Medicaid eligibility for low-income families has been more difficult than any of us expected. Working through this problem and putting together the mini-grant concept has been one of the best community/agency cooperative processes in my memory,” said Michael Deily, Director, UDOH’s Division of Health Care Financing. “I look forward to seeing the proposals and hope that we find some new outreach models that can become permanent features of our program.”

The Health Access Mini-Grants Program for Families with Children is the product of a unique public-private collaboration between the UDOH’s Division Health Care Financing (Medicaid), Utah Issues (Center for Poverty Research & Action), the Association for Utah Community (AUCH) and the UDOH’s Bureau of Primary Care, Rural and Ethnic Health. These agencies have met with more than 40 community groups from across the state to craft the mini-grants program to meet the diverse outreach needs of Utah’s uninsured populations. “The mini-grants program is an opportunity to reduce disparities and increase access for families and children in Utah,” said Marilyn Haynes-Brokopp, Director of the UDOH’s Bureau of Primary Care, Rural and Ethnic Health.

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“By getting money to the community level, the state acknowledges that health access efforts need to be customized for each geographic and demographic community. Working with mini-grant recipients strengthens state agencies’ community-based partnerships,” says Judi Hilman, Health Care Advocate with Utah Issues. “This will be critical for *future* state efforts to expand access to health coverage.”

“The mini-grants will help working families get the access to health care they need so they can become truly self-sufficient. With these grants we will create new bridges to families that were eligible for Medicaid before welfare reform using effective, community-based approaches,” Jesus Blanco, Outreach Coordinator, AUCH.

To help facilitate collaboration between community agencies, as the mini-grants program expects, applicants can join a statewide listserv (internet discussion group) managed by Utah Issues. To subscribe to the listserv (“U-HAP@lists.xmission.com” or Utah Health Access Project), interested community agencies (applicants and others) can call Utah Issues at 801-521-2035 or 1-800-331-5627. For further information about the grants or for a grant solicitation packet, agencies can visit the UDOH web site at <http://www.health.state.ut.us/pio/minigrant/20000922.html> or at Utah Issues’ web site: www.utahissues.org. For more information, call Elizabeth Heath, Program Manager, Division of Health Care Financing at 801-538-9982.

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