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News Release

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Check Your Taxes to See if You Qualify for CHIP or Medicaid

(Salt Lake City, UT) - Whether you get a tax refund, line 7 on the Federal 1040 tax form could be your lucky number. This line tells families if they qualify for valuable benefits such as the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) or Medicaid. To find out if your family qualifies all you have to do is compare your gross income on line 7 with the newly released federal income guidelines below.

"Many hard-working Utah families are surprised to find out that they qualify for health insurance and other important services," says Rod Betit, Executive Director, Utah Department of Health (UDOH). "Too many of Utah's working parents have jobs that don't offer health insurance and they don't earn enough to buy it on their own. CHIP makes sure that hard-working Utah families get the coverage they need," Betit added.

The federal income guidelines change each year and are used to determine who is eligible for various programs. New income guidelines have just been released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For example, a family of four (two children and two parents) can earn up to \$35,300 and still qualify for the Children's Health Insurance Program.

U.S. HHS Federal Qualification Income Guidelines April 2001 – April 2002

| <u>Family Size</u> | <u>Medicaid Guidelines</u> | <u>CHIP Guidelines</u> |
|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | \$8,590 | \$17,180 |
| 2 | \$11,610 | \$23,220 |
| 3 | \$14,630 | \$29,260 |
| 4 | \$17,650 | \$35,300 |
| 5 | \$20,670 | \$41,340 |
| 6 | \$23,690 | \$47,380 |

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A family of four earning below \$17,650 a year qualifies for Medicaid coverage. Families are encouraged to apply even if they make a little more than the guidelines. They may have certain deductions, such as self-employment expenses, which may lower their gross income to qualifying levels.

Utah's population is roughly 2,150,205; about 241,000-305,000 of these people do not have health insurance or are underinsured.* Utah's Medicaid program currently serves an average of 130,000 Utahns each month.

Since 1998, more than 32,000 Utah children of working parents who do not have health and dental coverage have benefited from CHIP. According to the UDOH's Health Status Survey there are 45,936 uninsured children (0-17) in Utah out of the 703,462 children in this age category. Currently there are more than 22,000 Utahns served by CHIP. The UDOH estimates that another 8,000 children could qualify for CHIP but have not yet been reached or applied for coverage.

Further information on CHIP and Medicaid can be obtained by calling the UDOH's health resource line at 1-888-222-2542 or by visiting any local health department and Workforce Services office.

April is public health month in Utah and across the nation. CHIP and Medicaid are public health programs administered through the Utah Department of Health.

*1999 U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) reports that Utah has a 14.2% rate of uninsured residents (adults and children combined) totaling approximately 305,329 people. This survey has always indicated a higher rate than the UDOH health status survey. Over the last three years, Utah's CPS average has been 13.8%. The 1999 national average is 15.5% with a three-year average at 16%.

*According to the 1996 Health Status Survey with an applied CPS rate the percentage of uninsured is 241,719 at 11.2 percent. This survey will be repeated this spring.

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