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Monday, April 25, 2011

Texas Fight Over "Obamacare" Continues

Lawmakers move interstate health compact forward.

By NIK RAJKOVIC

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The Texas House continues to move forward with plans to get the Lone Star State out from under **Obama care**.

A House committee last week approved plans to form a health care compact allowing Texas to partner with neighboring states to reduce the financial burden of Medicaid and Medicare.

Arlene Wohlgemuth with the **Texas Public Policy Foundation** thinks **House Bill 5** is a good idea.

"Medicaid is an entitlement program jointly funded by the federal government and state government," says Wohlgemuth. "Unfortunately all the rules are written by the federal government, and the program is literally bankrupting the state."

But John Hopkins with the **Texas Hospital Association** still has concerns.

"Would it be able to account for the demographics of caseload growth and poverty in the state?" asks Hopkins. "So we wouldn't want it to be seen as a way to cut the state or federal government's commitment to those programs."

Some believe the Obama administration won't allow the compact to happen, but state Representative **John Zerwas** says it's not up to the president to decide.

"The compact does not require the administration to sign off on it, all it requires is Congressional approval," says the Katy Republican. "It still would require Senate approval of course, and I think in the House there's a little more certainty around that."

More than a dozen states are expected to pass health care compacts by this time next year, and send the proposal to Congress for approval.

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