

# S.D. Gov. Dismayed By Health Care Ruling

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press

PIERRE — South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard said Thursday he was dismayed by the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that upholds the federal health care law, but said he'll work to protect the state from what he sees as the law's harmful effects.

The Republican said the state will not implement any part of President Barack Obama's law until after the November election in the hope that a new Congress and possibly a new president will scrap the measure.

"We don't intend to implement any part of this legislation this year," Daugaard said. "My hope is the new people in Washington will repeal this legislation. It's something I don't believe this nation can afford and I don't believe it's something the state can afford."

Daugaard said state officials will study all available options in the wake of the Supreme Court decision and "make an informed decision that minimizes the damage this law could do to South Dakota's health care and insurance industries."

Daugaard has long opposed the law, which requires most people to have health insurance or pay a penalty. The governor argues that decisions on health insurance and Medicaid coverage for low-income people should be left to the states.

Obama's health care overhaul also requires each state to create a health insurance exchange, an on-line marketplace for patients and small businesses to shop for insurance policies. Under the law, states are required to submit plans for the exchanges this fall.

Daugaard has delayed creating South Dakota's exchange, saying that if the state is forced to set one up, federal officials must give it more time to do so.

About 105,000 people in South Dakota, or about 13 percent of the state's population, didn't have health insurance in 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. But based on state officials' own survey, they believe the number of uninsured is 71,000, or about 9 percent.

The federal law seeks to reduce the number of people without insurance by requiring people to get insurance and by expanding Medicaid, the program that pays medical expenses for poor people with a mix of federal and state money.

Daugaard has been particularly troubled by the provision that would require states to expand Medicaid to cover people with higher incomes. The Supreme Court found problems with the federal law's expansion of Medicaid, but said the expansion could proceed as long as the federal government does not threaten to withhold state's entire Medicaid allotment if they don't take part in the law's expansion.

The governor said South Dakota will make no decision on expanding Medicaid until officials study the Supreme Court ruling in more detail.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley said the Supreme Court ruled the federal government could not withhold all of South Dakota's existing federal Medicaid money, more than \$600 million a year, if the state fails to expand cov-



Daugaard

erage under the program. But the court also did not say what level of lesser financial penalty might be acceptable, so Congress or federal agencies will have to decide that, he said.

Once that penalty is known, the governor and the Legislature can decide whether to comply with the law's requirements, Jackley said.

"I don't agree that the Legislature and the state will necessarily

have to implement Obamacare. The question is what is that exposure (to a financial penalty) if they don't. That's the burning question that this opinion does not answer," Jackley said.

Daugaard said South Dakota already covers about 115,000 residents on Medicaid, including about 80,000 low-income children, at a cost of about \$300 million a year to the state. The program also covers pregnant women, low-income elderly residents and disabled people, but the federal law would expand coverage mostly for healthy adults, he said.

The governor said expanding

Medicaid "is something I'm not very enthusiastic about."

"In a state like South Dakota, people still believe in self-reliance," he said. "I think able-bodied adults should be self-reliant."

South Dakota officials have said expanding Medicaid coverage to more people under the law would force the state to spend an additional \$99 million between 2014 and 2019. During those six years, the federal government would pay most of the cost of direct medical care for people added to the program, but the state would be responsible for extra administrative costs.

## Hearing Delayed Against Gunman's Girlfriend

ALLIANCE, Neb. (AP) — A hearing is delayed for a woman suspected of helping hide the body of a Denver man in western Nebraska.

Joshua Bullock is believed to have died at the hands of a gunman who was killed in a standoff in Alliance earlier this month.

Rose Siefke is charged with being an accessory. KQSK radio in Chadron says a preliminary hearing, set for Friday, has been reset for July 17.

Investigators believe Siefke helped Andres Gonzalez hide Bullock's body. Bullock's burned pickup was found near Chadron in December. Human remains were found near Chadron last week.

## 2 More Cougars Killed In Residential S.D. Areas

RAPID CITY (AP) — South Dakota wildlife officials have killed two more mountain lions that wandered into residential areas.

Game, Fish and Parks Department regional wildlife manager John Kanta tells the *Rapid City Journal* a young female was shot in Custer on Tuesday evening and an older male lion was killed just north of Rapid City the same night.

Four cougars have been killed by state wildlife officials and Rapid City police in a span of 11 days. Kanta says there is no clear reason for the recent flurry of lion activity near people.

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## Neb. Gov. Vows To Fight Medicaid Expansion

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Gov. Dave Heineman promised Thursday to block any effort to expand Nebraska's Medicaid program, a key provision of the federal health care overhaul that the U.S. Supreme Court deemed optional for states while upholding most of the law.

The Republican governor told reporters that expanding coverage to at least 100,000 more Ne-braskans would drain money from other priorities, such as education, or require a tax increase. He said he has no plans to call a special session to more quickly comply with the requirements of the landmark law signed by President Barack Obama.

"It's clear it's now the law of the land," Heineman said. "We're going to study this. We're going to thoroughly review it in light of the changes that occurred today and then make a determination of how we're going to move forward."

Heineman said the state faced too many unknowns to enact a state-based insurance marketplace right away, including the outcome of the November presidential election and whether the federal government would grant states another deadline extension to comply with its rules. GOP presidential hopeful Mitt Romney has vowed to repeal the law if he wins, and Heineman said the ruling will energize Republican and independent voters.

Heineman denied he was intentionally delaying action, saying state officials needed time to interpret the ruling and how it would affect Nebraska. States have until Nov. 16 to tell the federal government how they plan to run an exchange program mandated in the bill, which is designed to let customers compare prices.

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