

## **LEAVITT TO LOBBY CONGRESS ON TOBACCO SETTLEMENT**

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Gov. Mike Leavitt will join other governors in lobbying Congress to keep a federal agency from tapping into the states' settlement with the tobacco industry.

The National Governors Association hopes to persuade the House to go along with the Senate version of the emergency supplemental appropriations bill. It would prevent the Health Care Financing Administration from claiming up to 75 percent of the \$206 billion settlement.

The Senate and House bills are expected to go to a House-Senate conference committee this week, and a compromise bill is to be crafted there.

Leavitt, who will become chairman of the governors' association in August, said he and his colleagues are trying to coordinate their efforts to lobby the 28 senators and 25 representatives on the conference committee.

"There's some question as to how we should handle it, what's the best vehicle," Leavitt said.

Because of Clinton administration needs for increased funds for American participation in the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, it is possible the supplemental appropriations bill will be scrapped and a new, expanded measure drafted.

Leavitt said the governors hope Congress will pass the original Senate bill rather than write separate legislation on the tobacco settlement.

Two House measures, including one proposed by Rep. Jim Hansen, R-Utah, are pending before the Commerce Committee. Both would prevent the federal government from seeking reimbursement for Medicaid funds spent on treatment of smoke-related illnesses.

The tobacco settlement signed Nov. 23, 1998, is expected to pay the money to 46 states during 25 years. Utah's share is expected to be \$836 million.