

## **TOBACCO SETTLEMENT MONIES KEEP LAWMAKERS WORKING**

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Little had been settled late Friday on what to do with Utah's share of the national tobacco settlement.

With the first installments totaling about \$27 million, lawmakers tinkered with a plan that would begin by spending and saving equal portions. And the proposal Senate leaders put forward would boost state funding for anti-tobacco programs between \$2 million to \$4 million.

Utah already spends roughly \$1 million a year to fight smoking, and the state would begin next year to cover all of its tobacco prevention and cessations efforts with money from the 1998 settlement, which could reach as much as \$896 million in yearly installments of about \$30 million.

"This is the strongest program we could put forward," said Senate President Lane Beattie, who will help rework Senate Bill 15 on Monday to reflect the latest plan.

Yet, uncertainty seemed likely to dog the proposal into the weekend and the final three days of the 2000 Legislature. House lawmakers have yet to look over the Senate GOP's plan, although they reportedly softened a previous position that all the tobacco money should go into a trust fund.

And Democrats, with a bill that seeks up to \$8 million annually, have a few amendments they intend to try.

Anti-tobacco activists, meanwhile, planned to continue their public-pressure campaign to get more money dedicated to tobacco fighting programs. They originally sought \$16.8 million to mount a comprehensive program suggested by the federal Centers for Disease Control. Then, as the Legislature began, they said \$10 million would do.

The activists began broadcasting television commercials and circulating on radio talk shows Thursday to promote a service to people who want to know how to contact their senators and representatives.

The number, (801) 483-1500, fielded 850 calls Friday.

"It [the tobacco money decision-making] is moving," said Beverly May of American Cancer Society, Utah chapter. "Nothing solidified yet, but at least it's moving. Monday will be telling."

Atty. Gen. Jan Graham, under fire by the GOP-controlled Legislature for her role in promoting the public-pressure campaign, met with Beattie on Friday to discuss the funding.

"We are hopeful," said Graham spokeswoman Tracey Tabet. "We will revisit this first thing Monday morning, and we are hoping we will reach a number that is acceptable, but we're not there yet."

Sen. Lyle Hillyard, R-Logan, got in a jab at critics as he explained tobacco money decisions would wait until Monday. He said: "And we would like to enjoy watching tobacco commercials all weekend."