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# Lawmakers continue search for Medicaid solution in hearings

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By Michael Doudna, Reporter

MONTGOMERY, AL (WSFA) - Medicaid in Alabama currently faces an \$85 million deficit. With the cost continuing to grow, the state needs a long term solution.

"Standing here today, I don't have the answer to that and I don't know anyone who has the answer," said Sen. Clyde Chambliss.

For the last month, lawmakers have met to discuss problems with the state's biggest agency.

"My concern is about the quality of care for the patients were trying to serve under Medicaid budget. I don't want to see a reduction in that," Rep. John Knight said.

If no solution is found, it could cripple the state's healthcare system, forcing the state to miss out on more than \$700 million in federal funding.

Governor Robert Bentley said he thinks he can help Medicaid survive for this year. However, that does not solve the long-term problem as costs will likely be even greater next year.

"It's a very complicated program and a very, very complicated problem," Chambliss said.

With funding solutions few and far between, Governor Bentley met with Senator Jim McClendon on Wednesday to discuss a possible lottery bill.

"We deal with all options, not only with a special session but also all options of money; we look at all options and we will continue to do that," Bentley said.

If anything comes from that meeting, remains to be seen. However, lawmakers seem to hope they can find some cash for the state's biggest agency.

Medicaid would be a major focus of any special session, which could come as early as this summer.

Bentley says he has not taken any options off the table when it comes to a special session.

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