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"Epic" Week Not Materializing



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By Illinois Radio Network

It's now the middle of what the governor wanted to be an "epic week" on Medicaid changes, but so far his proposal hasn't moved forward. The governor's Medicaid plan surfaced in a House committee but its sponsor, state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago), didn't want to send it to the floor. The plan cuts \$1.4 billion out of the state's Medicaid budget, but it counts on new revenue from a \$1 per pack cigarette tax increase that's not part of this bill.

Feigenholtz says there's no backup plan in case the hike fails. "We're going to have to shut down whole programs. It's going to be devastating," she says. "We may have to close more institutions. We may have to... I mean, I don't know what would happen with education. I don't even want to go there. Don't make me go there." Lawmakers are counting on roughly \$700 million from a cigarette tax hike. Feigenholtz wouldn't say specifically what's causing the vote delay, other than she and her colleagues are "crossing the I's and dotting the T's." The measure is S.B. 2840, House Amendment 3.