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Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's Administration announced that it was awaiting further guidance from the Obama Administration before it would finalize a decision on a health benefit exchange in West Virginia. The federal government's health reform law provides states with three options: a state based exchange; a state partnership exchange; and a full federally operated exchange. Based on analysis already completed, state officials have tentative plans to proceed with a state partnership exchange so West Virginia can retain the ability to assist consumers and industry while evading the financial liability that a state based exchange would create in future years.

"Based on everything we know, we are likely to head in the direction of a partnership," said Rob Alsop, chief of staff to Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin. "The West Virginia's approach is to protect consumers and the private marketplace to the greatest degree allowed under federal health reform, while continuing the fiscally responsible policies heralded by Governor Tomblin for over 25 years," Revenue Secretary Charles Lorensen added.

Before a decision can be finalized, State officials are requiring additional information. According to Jeremiah Samples, an administrator with the Insurance Commission, "The burden, at this point, is on the federal government to provide guidance to states so an informed decision can be made. The impacts of these decisions are too great for guesswork." Due to delays in the release of guidance, federal officials postponed the date by which states have to make a determination on a state based exchange until December 14, 2012, and for a state partnership exchange until February 15, 2013.