



The Ohio Council Insight

January 23, 2013

STATE POLICY/LEGISLATION

1. Medicaid Expansion – Advocacy

Advocacy to promote Medicaid expansion is a priority right now. The Governor is set to release his executive budget on February 4th, and our best chance to move Medicaid expansion forward in Ohio lies in having it included in the administration's budget. The Ohio Council is coordinating our advocacy efforts with the [Ohio Alliance for Health Transformation](#), which is a statewide coalition of individuals, community organizations, businesses, associations, coalitions, health care providers, insurers, medical professionals, philanthropic organizations, religious organizations, consumer groups and advocates who support Ohio Medicaid expansion.

Last week, a non-partisan report, [Expanding Medicaid in Ohio: A Preliminary Analysis of Likely Effects](#), from the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, The Ohio State University, the Urban Institute and Regional Economic Models, Inc. highlights the impact of Medicaid expansion on the state budget, Ohio's economy, and covering Ohio's uninsured populations. The report highlights that a decision to include Medicaid expansion in the next state budget will:

- help Ohio realize nearly \$1.4 billion in savings through 2022
- create over 30,000 jobs through 2022; and
- result in nearly 500,000 uninsured Ohioans gaining health coverage.

Information from this report needs to be shared with our elected officials. The best opportunity for Medicaid expansion to occur in Ohio is for Governor Kasich to include Medicaid expansion in his executive budget, released at the beginning of February. We will also need to make sure state lawmakers are open to considering Medicaid expansion throughout the state budget process.

The Coalition for Healthy Communities, a statewide mental health and addiction services advocacy coalition of which the Ohio Council is a member and co-chair, called on Ohio Governor John Kasich and the Members of the 130th General Assembly to expand Medicaid income eligibility to improve access to mental health and addiction services. Here is a [copy](#) of the open letter published in the Columbus Dispatch last week and that we hope will be published in other regional papers soon. This powerful message on the importance of access to mental health and addiction services as an important tool to support jobs, families, and communities is resonating with our elected officials, the business community, hospitals, and insurers.

GET INVOLVED! If you haven't done so already, we strongly encourage you to **join your regional Medicaid Expansion Coalition** – organized by The Ohio Alliance for Health Transformation. New regional groups have been added in Akron/Canton and Toledo. Here's the link to find your [regional coalition](#). (TL)

12. Free Prescription Assistance Program for All Ohio Residents

The Ohio Drug Card is free statewide prescription assistance program that offers free drug cards to all Ohio residents. The program provides discounts on both brand and generic medications with an average savings of around 30%. The program has no restrictions to membership, no income requirements, no age limitations and there are no applications to fill out. Everyone is eligible to receive savings!

The Ohio Drug Card was launched to help uninsured and underinsured residents afford their prescription medications. The program can also be used by people who have health insurance coverage with no prescription benefits, which is common in many health savings accounts (HSA) and high deductible health plans. Additionally, people with prescription coverage can use the program to get a discount on prescription drugs that are not covered by insurance.

There are currently more than 56,000 pharmacy locations across the country participating in the program, including all major pharmacy chains. To locate participating pharmacies and search medication pricing, go to www.ohiodrugcard.com. There you can also learn more about the program and print customized cards for your friends, family, employees, etc. No personal information is required to print a card and all prescriptions processed through the program are completely confidential. There is also a new smart phone app, Free Rx iCard, available to make obtaining a card even more convenient.

If you have any questions or would like hard cards for your patients contact Michelle Ruble, Program Director for Ohio Drug Card, by sending an email to mruble@ohiodrugcard.com or visit www.ohiodrugcard.com for more information. (BC)

13. Nursing Home Family Satisfaction Survey

The Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) has released the latest edition of the Nursing Home Family Satisfaction Survey. The Survey was conducted between May and December 2012 by the Scripps Gerontology Center of Miami University in Oxford and asked family members their opinions on activities, administration, admission, choices, direct care and nursing, laundry, meals and dining, social services, therapy and general satisfaction. The Department indicated that the Survey had been revised this year to better capture the needs and ideas of families and that because of the changes, it cautioned against directly comparing the Survey results with those from previous years. The ratings were released as part of ODA's Ohio Long-Term Care Consumer Guide which also includes other information about nursing homes and residential care facilities, including inspection results, a list of available services, staffing levels, results of resident surveys and more. The Guide is available at www.ltcoho.org. (MB)

14. Advocacy Case Study – Juvenile Justice

The Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University released "[A Bridge to Somewhere: How Research Made its Way into Legislative Juvenile Justice Reform in Ohio](#)". It is a case study outlining the collaborative policy change model that resulted in the 2011 passage of Ohio House Bill 86 enacting juvenile justice reforms grounded in evidence-based practices and adolescent development research. The case study describes the elements and principles used by an engaged team of experts, practitioners, key stakeholders, advocates and policymakers to bring about this legislative achievement and is meant to be a learning tool for those interested in understanding a collaborative approach to policy change and potentially pursuing similar efforts in the future. (MB)