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**Ohio Speech & Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition
Legislative Activities Report
March 2019**

The Legislature has been busy with committee hearings on recently introduced legislation. OSHGAC is watching many bills, including SB 25, which revises the work and education requirement for Medicaid expansion consumers. More specifically, the bill:

- Requires that an individual be employed at least 20 hours per week or enrolled in an accredited institution of higher education or an occupational training program to satisfy the requirement;
- Raises to 65 (from 55) the age an individual must be to be exempt from the requirement on the basis of age;
- Provides that, in order for an individual to be exempt on the basis of having an intensive physical health care need or serious mental illness, the individual must be medically certified as physically or mentally unfit for employment because of the condition;
- Creates a new exemption for an individual who personally provides care for a child under one year of age or a child who has a medical condition or disability that the Medicaid Director determines is serious enough to warrant an exemption; and
- Expands the work and education requirement to apply to individuals who enroll in Medicaid under the parents and other caretaker relatives eligibility group.

Many of these requirements mirror the work requirements that the Kasich Administration submitted to CMS for approval last year. CMS has yet to approve or deny that waiver request.

Another bill that OSHGAC is watching closely is HB 29, which adds exemptions to an existing requirement that Medicaid charge co-payments. Under the bill, the Department would be prohibited from charging a copayment to a Medicaid recipient if both of the following are true:

1. The recipient has a developmental disability or serious mental illness; and

2. The recipient's sole source of income is Social Security disability benefits, Supplemental Security Income benefits, or both.

A Medicaid recipient who meets the above criteria may present to a Medicaid provider the recipient's Social Security Administration benefit letter as verification of the recipient's exemption from the copayment requirement. If a recipient does so, the Medicaid provider cannot charge the recipient a copayment.

OSHGAC was recently contacted by Representative Casey Weinstein's office. He is considering introducing legislation, along with co-sponsor Representative Allison Russo, to require insurance coverage of hearing aids for children. He has some constituents who have had issues with their insurance plan treating hearing aids for their child as 'cosmetic' even though their physician has indicated they're medically necessary. We will be meeting with the Representatives on March 20th to discuss the bill further. It is likely that this bill, similar to other mandatory coverage of hearing aid bills introduced in years past, will receive opposition from the insurance plans and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce as a healthcare mandate bill.

The FY20-21 biennial budget bill will likely be introduced on March 15, 2019. This is later than most budget bills are introduced, but in keeping with tradition with a new administration. The process will begin in the House Finance Committee and then will move to the Senate Finance Committee in April. The Senate will have to finish its work by mid-June so that conference committee can finish its work and get the bill to the Governor's desk by June 30th. OSHGAC will be working to ensure that continued funding is included in the budget bill for the Ohio Hearing Aid Assistance Program.

Outside of the legislature, OSHGAC has been asked by the Ohio Occupational Therapy Association to sign onto a memorandum of understanding regarding the Medicaid Schools Program (MSP). The memo seeks to clarify referrals, service delivery and the IEP process under the MSP. In addition, it seeks to clarify ethical concerns for providers who are operating as "Ordering, Referring and Prescribing" (ORP) providers under Medicaid. OSHGAC members have reviewed the document and now the organization should consider if it wants to add its official support to the document.

We are monitoring the following legislation on your behalf in the 133rd General Assembly:

SB1 **REDUCE REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS** (MCCOLLEY R, ROEGNER K) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions and to continue the provision of this act on and after August 18, 2019.

Current Status: 3/5/2019 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform,
(Third Hearing)

- SB7** **TEMP STATE OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES-MILITARY** (LEHNER P, HACKETT R) Regarding temporary state occupational licenses for members of the military and their spouses.
Current Status: 2/27/2019 - Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Second Hearing)
- SB14** **DRUG PRICE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE** (MAHARATH T) Regarding pharmacy benefit managers, pharmacists, and the disclosure to patients of drug price information.
Current Status: 2/12/2019 - Introduced
- SB25** **MEDICAID WORK, EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS** (HUFFMAN M) Regarding work and education requirements for the Medicaid program.
Current Status: 2/26/2019 - Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid, (First Hearing)
- SB29** **MEDICAID COPAYMENTS** (DOLAN M) Regarding Medicaid copayment requirements.
Current Status: 2/19/2019 - Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid, (Second Hearing)