



Mid-Biennium Review Recommendations

Advocates for Ohio's Future works to build strong communities through investments in vital public services, including health, human services, and early care & education. As Ohioans continue to struggle, Advocates for Ohio's Future is hopeful that an improving economy will help rebuild Ohio's infrastructure and support communities devastated by foreclosure and joblessness. However, additional support and investment is needed now. The coalition recommends that the following principles and policies be incorporated into the Mid-Biennium Review of the budget:

Support Workforce Development

The best way to support all Ohioans is to make sure that our state rebounds from the recession offering more good jobs. Public services that support Ohio's employers and workforce – including health care, quality child care, food and housing benefits – make jobs better and create more opportunity for all. Ohio should invest in these workforce supports as well as focus on “employment first” for people with disabilities.

Keep Family at Home and in Our Communities

Home- and community-based services are the preferred choice for long-term care services and supports – and are the most cost effective. The home- and community-based programs should continue to provide maximum consumer choice, and be adequately funded to ensure that home and community care is a viable option in Ohio for seniors and people with disabilities of all ages who need care but want to stay in their community.

Enhance Community Behavioral Health

Ohio's communities can be stronger and its workforce can be increased if adequate investment is made in community mental health and addiction services. Right now, more people than ever are being turned away from vital supports and treatment. Advocates for Ohio's Future commends the additional investment in community mental health and substance abuse treatment services; however, it is not enough. The coalition asks that Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services be held harmless from the planned \$6.2 million cut for FY13.

Support Quality Early Care & Education

Strong and accountable child care providers create communities where people want to live and employers want to locate. The Mid-Biennium Review should support the policies and funding necessary for full implementation of the Early Learning Challenge goals in the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant. The goals include increasing participation in Ohio's early childhood quality rating system (Step Up to Quality), implementing a child assessment system to make sure children enter school ready to learn, and strengthening the quality of early education programs by providing additional professional development for teachers.

Deliver Community Services Efficiently

Ohio should build on the reforms in last year's budget bill in long-term care, health care, and behavioral health. By improving on what's working, incorporating consumer, family and community feedback, and providing adequate funding, Ohio's human service delivery system can become even more streamlined, efficient, and cost effective. The coalition supports adopting the recommendation in the Mid-Biennium Review for a single eligibility determination solution.

Develop Effective Prescribing Practices

The proper use of medication, tailored to the unique needs of the person, is critical to the health and well-being of consumers in child welfare, juvenile justice, aging, developmental disabilities, and other Medicaid and non-Medicaid systems. Overmedication can be dangerous and expensive, harming adults and posing especially dangerous risks for children. Consistent with the Office of Health Transformation's goals for enhanced care coordination, AOF supports continued efforts and leadership of the BEACON Council to address this important issue, beginning with Ohio's children.

Advocates for Ohio's Future urges the Kasich Administration and the Ohio General Assembly to invest in Ohio's communities with high-quality services delivered efficiently.