



Health Care



Health, human service, and early care & education programs form a critical safety net for Ohioans: supporting a healthy workforce and making it possible for working families to stay on their feet in tough times.

This fact sheet focuses on **health care**, the impact these services are having, and how they will continue saving Ohio taxpayers money while providing high-quality services to our state's most vulnerable. **The entire range of health care services, including mental and behavioral health, is critical to supporting a healthy, productive workforce. Quality, affordable health care prevents problems before they occur and reduces absenteeism.**

Medicaid and Health Care

What works: For the 2 million Ohioans receiving health care services through Medicaid (including coverage for 1 in 3 births), health care spending improves health, produces a healthier workforce, and lowers health care costs for other payers. Medicaid covers low-income children, parents, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and frail seniors – the most vulnerable Ohioans. Each dollar in state money draws down approximately \$2 in federal funds. And studies show that Medicaid has an economic multiplier effect of 3.14. In other words, every state dollar invested in Medicaid yields \$3.14 in economic activity, reflected in job growth in the health care industry, in related jobs in communities where these dollars are spent, and in economic activity that generates profits, investments, and overall growth. Health care research also shows that uninsured people delay needed care until conditions worsen and are more expensive to treat. Their costs are shifted throughout the health care system in inefficient ways. Approximately \$1,000 of an annual Ohio family insurance premium is attributable to paying for uncompensated care.

Children with health insurance — including Medicaid — are more likely to obtain preventive care, have a regular source of ongoing care, participate in physical activities, and have better health outcomes than uninsured children. The rate of uninsured children in Ohio has improved from 9.8% in 1998 to 4% in 2008 — directly attributable to Ohio's strong Medicaid/CHIP program. This is remarkable given the growth in Ohio's poverty rate. But it should be noted that children whose parents are also covered have better health outcomes than covered children with uninsured parents.

Improving on what works: Medicaid reflects inefficiencies found in our current health care delivery system. Medicaid can be the leader in transforming health care delivery to a more efficient, cost-effective system that delivers higher quality care. Opportunities exist to: 1) Expand home and community services to people at risk for more expensive nursing home care; 2) Provide better-coordinated care and reduce avoidable spending for people with chronic conditions through patient-centered primary care; and 3) Pay providers to improve quality and outcomes. For children and families, Medicaid enrollment and renewal has been streamlined through common-sense measures that ensure more eligible children and parents can get health coverage. Ohio can build on these efforts and continue to cut the red tape.

Behavioral Health

What works: Treatments for mental health and substance use disorders are as effective as treatment for other health conditions when appropriately available. The state's investment in community mental health and addiction treatment services, when adequately funded, reduces avoidable emergency room visits, jail and prison populations, nursing home populations, the number of children in the child welfare system, suicide rates, and deaths from prescription drug overdose – while increasing the productivity of the workforce and children's success in school. Last year, 342,000 people received assessments or services from Ohio's community mental health system, including 112,000 children. And 103,000 people, including 10,000 adolescents, were served by Ohio's alcohol and drug addiction system. When Ohio families are able to receive community mental health and substance use disorder treatment when they need it — early intervention before a crisis — they are more likely to remain employed or in school, care for their families, have better health, and live independently in the community.

Improving on what works: The community behavioral health system has become more efficient at the state agency, county board, and provider levels, including: reducing staffing levels, sharing back-office and administrative functions, and diversifying revenue through social enterprise and earned income. Ohio must maintain its current investment in community behavioral health services, address Medicaid financing issues, and continue to develop the capacity for better integration of behavioral health and physical health care delivery systems.

Look for other fact sheets on:

- Children and Families
- Seniors and People with Disabilities
- The Safety Net: Food and Shelter

During these lean economic times, Ohio faces the challenge of serving the dramatically rising number of people in need at the same time that the state's resources are decreasing. To meet this challenge, human service advocates have implemented more streamlined, efficient, and cost-effective methods of service delivery — but more remains to be done in some areas.

Advocates for Ohio's Future believes that communities are stronger and more economically viable when people's basic needs are met. As Ohioans move from vulnerability to self-sufficiency, they are ready and able to make a contribution in return.

If we fail to invest in health care for vulnerable Ohioans and other supportive services for Ohio's workforce, our state will be poorly positioned for when prosperity returns. Advocates for Ohio's Future supports vital public services that advance the long-term health of our families and communities. A budget solution should maintain these critical services at a level that meets people's needs. **To learn more and to help build strong communities and better lives through vital public services, visit:**

www.advocatesforohio.org

Advocates for Ohio's Future is a statewide coalition that works to maintain vital public services – health, human services, and early care & education – at a level that meets people's basic needs and protects our state's most vulnerable populations.

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Better Lives.*