



Advocates for Ohio's Future

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ADVOCATES FOR OHIO'S FUTURE PRAISES NEW PRESUMPTIVE ELIGIBILITY RULES

COLUMBUS – Advocates for Ohio's Future today commended Governor John Kasich, the Office of Health Transformation, and lawmakers for improving pregnant women's and children's access to health care by expanding so-called "presumptive eligibility."

The new initiative is expected to reduce the incidence of premature births and low-birthweight babies by giving pregnant women access to prenatal care that they otherwise could not afford. "The Governor has delivered on a promise he made when he came into office," AOF Co-Chair Gayle Channing Tenenbaum said. "By supporting prenatal care up-front, Ohio will not only head off the expense of these risky births, but the long-term costs associated with providing education and services to children with developmental delays."

Channing Tenenbaum went on to note that even children born healthy are more likely to grow up with healthy outcomes – whether that be seeking preventive care, screening for developmental delays or social/emotional issues, or getting medical attention when they are sick – if they have timely access to health services. "Presumptive eligibility for children is critical across many health and human service systems, especially in child welfare," Channing Tenenbaum said. "The long-term cost savings to Ohio's taxpayers must not be underestimated."

AOF Co-Chair Mark Davis explained the importance of presumptive eligibility in economic terms. "By helping low-income women get the prenatal care they otherwise could not afford, the Governor could be preventing thousands of premature or low-weight births every year," Davis said. "The cost of even one of these high-risk births places a burden on a system already stretched to its limits. When you factor in likely long-term savings in rehabilitation, special education, juvenile justice, long-term care, and other services, you see how monumental this policy decision is."

Davis added that by expanding the number of providers that can determine presumptive eligibility, the measure will also grant more consumers immediate access to health care.

- 30 -

Advocates for Ohio's Future 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.