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April is Autism Awareness Month

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1. Ohio Jobs Budget ... Overview of Recent Progress

The Governor's Office of Health Transformation (OHT) has provided guidance regarding progress of the Ohio Jobs Budget over the past two weeks, as the bill works its way through the legislative process. While Medicaid expansion language was removed from the budget language as it left the House of Representatives and moved on to the Senate, there continues to be discussion regarding the need to assure health care coverage for low-income, working Ohioans ([read the impact summary](#)). The Senate has set a deliberation schedule that would move [HB59](#) forward to conference committee by mid-June.

Governor John Kasich and key Administration staff support the need for Medicaid Expansion, highlighting the importance of expanded medical coverage to new Medicaid enrollees – estimated at approximately 275,000 Ohioans. Options that would assure coverage include a separate stand-alone bill. The Medicaid expansion plan as originally proposed by Governor Kasich would have drawn into the state an estimated \$13 billion in federal funds over seven years. House lawmakers, however, voted in favor of an amendment that would give the Chamber more time to study options.

In response to the current status of the legislation, the Governor's Office noted, "The process continues, and the Governor is totally committed to extending health coverage to people who are

battling mental illness and addiction -- 26,000 veterans and other Ohioans for whom health care is a ladder up and out of poverty. We look forward to continuing our work with the House and Senate on this issue and to advancing the rest of our Medicaid and health-system reforms.”

According to OHT Director Greg Moody, federal officials recently have indicated that they would approve a handful of ‘demonstration waivers’ for states to experiment with Medicaid expansion. Moody explained at the recent OPRA Conference (see article, this issue) that under this model, states could extend coverage eligibility for three years, with some individuals on the upper end of the Federal Poverty Level buying coverage through a private health insurance exchange, with Medicaid dollars. He noted that this proposal could allow the service system to help create workforce linkages, promote greater personal responsibility, and provide affordable basic coverage.

Directors of OHT partner agencies provided additional budget testimony last week, including DODD Director John Martin. He noted that the Department priorities include expanded home- and community-based service options, as well as the ongoing downsizing of DODD-operated Developmental Centers; increasing access to autism services; and adding stakeholder recommendations to legislation now in the Senate.

Regarding specific aspects of the current budget proposal under consideration that affect the DD community, OHT reports that rebalancing long-term care and enhancing developmental disabilities services remain Administration priorities. *More at www.healthtransformation.gov*

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2. Autism Awareness Month Seeks Greater Understanding



The cause of Autism Spectrum Disorder is still a puzzle.

See The Ohio Autism Recommendations, “Quality Lives.”

More about autism at: [Autism Fact Sheet](#)

During last week’s Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) Spring Conference, Jerod Smalley, Sports Director at NBC4 in Columbus and father of two sons with autism, offered his perspective of hands-on advocacy for affected families. Smalley has a continuing series on Channel 4 named ‘The Autism Puzzle,’ focused on research, and resources for parents. Just as Smalley emphasized, during Autism Awareness Month, the focus is on awareness of these issues, and also on understanding.

Looking beyond ‘awareness’, it is the understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and its range, that can make a positive difference in society for children and adults with autism.

What We Are Learning Now ...

New research suggests that autism affects the brain differently as individuals with ASD age, a finding that may allow for a more targeted treatment approach. Using a new technique, researchers were able to directly compare the brain activity of children and adults with autism, and found marked differences in brain activity depending on age.

Daniel Dickstein of Brown University and Bradley Hospital who led the recent [study](#) published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* notes, “We found that brain activity changes associated with autism do not just happen in childhood and then stop. Instead, our study suggests that they continue to develop. This is the first study to show that.”

The researchers looked at functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) brain scans that were conducted on children and adults with autism in previous studies. They found evidence of much more activity occurring in the minds of adults with autism as compared to children, when the individuals were looking at faces and doing other social tasks. This finding could have major implications for how autism is treated. Researchers explained, “If we can identify the shift in the parts of the brain that autism affects as we age, then we can better target treatments for people with ASD.”

Jobs Budget 2.0 and Autism

Increased access to autism services remains a funding priority within the proposed budget.

The Administration is funding innovative projects that will help improve early diagnosis and interventions for individuals with autism, including the Autism Diagnostic Education Project (ADEP); and funding to support Specialized Training for Early Intervention Professionals. Funding for these autism initiatives is made possible through Ohio’s Health Transformation Innovation Fund. A total of \$1.325 million is made available for these projects, and also includes efforts to support the Employment First initiative, which will assist individuals with developmental disabilities – some of whom have autism – in finding community-based jobs.

More at <http://www.iwg-autism.org/>; Acknowledgements to www.disabilitycoop.com

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3. OPRA Conference Spotlights Challenges, Change

The Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) hosted its Spring Conference at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin, April 16 - 17. Recognizing another great opportunity to get the word out to hundreds of stakeholders regarding several initiatives, DODD Director John Martin presented an overview of work in-progress at the Department, and fielded questions from an attentive audience representing expertise throughout the statewide service provider system.

OPRA President Mark Davis suggested that Director Martin begin his presentation with one of his rather legendary ‘stories-with-a-message.’ Director Martin jumped right in with a tale involving his son, Joel, who enjoys dressing colorfully, and himself, as Dad, misinterpreting a young person’s interest in Joel’s apparel. The bottom line was that Director Martin found that as a Dad, he had not ‘looked beyond’ his own son’s disability at that moment in describing his son’s choices. He later realized that the young man’s inquiry was just a routine clothing question requiring no mention of Joel’s disability, and commented,

“I continue to learn from my son and the situations that surround us.”

Director Martin then segued to, “Let me share some data with you ...” a phrase stakeholders in Ohio’s DD community know will preface useful information he has studied, that has been

gathered by various local, state, or national researchers, and upon which decisions can be based. For example, following slides showing progress in downsizing Ohio's DCs, and ranking other efforts among national peer agencies, he noted,

“There are now several areas of challenge and change within the DD service system ... is it time we have a discussion about our system? Looking at the various national, state, and local roles and the forces at work in each, I believe there are opportunities to be examined.”

In addition to Director Martin's comments, the two-day conference featured several speakers and break-out sessions that highlighted challenges, changes, and progress that Ohio service providers will be seeing this year and beyond. Leslie Wilson, a presenter with many years of experience in the development and staffing of Business Leadership Networks (BLNs) in Ohio, Florida, and Oklahoma, was enthusiastic about Ohio's Employment First initiative. Remarking on efforts in the past year under that umbrella, she emphasized the need for employer engagement, saying,

“We need to engage employers! We need to prepare the workplace for a diverse workforce – an influx of people with disabilities. That change is coming.”



Silent Support



The OPRA conference's lunch break on day one involved an option for attendees to board buses to the Statehouse for a silent show of support for Medicaid Expansion.

While the effort did not persuade the House members to keep the proposal in the budget, it was a strong show of silent support, rallying enough other participants from around the state to ring the Capitol Square perimeter.



“Now, you see, with Employment First, the priority is community-based employment ...”



Kristen Helling, DODD lead-person for the Employment First initiative, speaks with a visitor at the OPRA Conference. On the information table is Employment First literature, and a little employment encouragement, in the form of ... Payday candy bars.



“You have to have the long view.”



Office of Health Transformation Director Greg Moody makes a point about the expansion of Medicaid benefits. He added,

“I would prefer not to kick the can down the road. I would prefer to see it happen now ... and not miss this opportunity.”

More OPRA, and conference highlights at www.opra.org

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4. ‘Partners in Justice’ Conference Fosters Collaboration

Ohio Partners in Justice is a coalition of professionals from Ohio’s criminal justice system and developmental disabilities system, as well as mental health professionals and other advocates for people with developmental disabilities.

A one-day conference sponsored by *Ohio Partners in Justice* on April 12 at the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Auditorium in Columbus addressed the subject of re-entry to society for ex-offenders with intellectual disabilities. Attendees included a broad range of professionals within the DD community, as well as in the areas of mental health, and rehabilitation and corrections. A goal of the conference was to explore how uniquely person-centered practices can

facilitate the successful re-entry of offenders with intellectual disabilities into their communities following incarceration. Free to attendees, the conference was funded by a grant from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council.

Featured speaker was Carol Blessing of the Employment & Disability Institute at Cornell University in New York. Blessing has spent more than ten of 25 years of professional service as a faculty member of the University's Employment and Disability Institute within the School of Industrial and Labor Relations. She currently serves as Director of a project within New York State psychiatric centers, designed to enhance the system's ability to facilitate community employment and recovery-oriented services with people who have been diagnosed with a mental illness. Her presentation to the Partners in Justice conference was anything but dull!

She walked energetically around the auditorium, noting hurdles involved in working within a system designed as a model of “custody, care, and control,” (incarceration) while simultaneously trying to provide individuals person-centered support and elements of self-determination. Blessing said, “Being ‘present’ is different than being connected or engaged.” She continued,



“Once a person is getting out of the corrections system, ‘Staying Out’ is not a specific enough outcome!

**We have to ask, ‘What will you do?’
We need to replace the ‘one big picture’
with lots of little pictures that, together,
mean the big picture. A picture
that means something to them.”**



**“Like one of the men I worked with told me,
‘Values are what make your heart beat.’
We need to find out what makes a person’s
heart beat, and then take it from there.”**

Presenting an overview of the *Inmate to Citizen Program*, a 5-year project funded by the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, Blessing described a plan that incorporated the person-centered approach into how the New York State Department of Correctional Services rehabilitated and prepared people with intellectual disabilities for community living, learning, and earning, upon release. In providing glimpses of individual stories both positive and not-so-positive, Blessing brought forward for consideration ideas to replicate in other states. The inter-active breakout sessions that followed showed that attendees were eager to put the ideas to work in Ohio immediately, to assist people they are working with. Participants literally reached across the aisles and rows to discuss ideas ...



Talk about engagement!

Participants at the Partners in Justice conference spoke eagerly among themselves during break-out sessions and introduced each other. One was heard to say,

“I have a guy I’m working with starting on Monday. This would be a perfect time to see how this approach could help him get on track and make some plans.”



For more information contact Vicki Jenkins at vicki.jenkins@dodd.ohio.gov.

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5. New Mobile Application and Online Complaint Form

Who wants to hear about complaints all the time? The DODD Major Unusual Incident (MUI) Unit, that’s who! As a part of the Division of Legal and Oversight, the MUI Unit is very enthusiastic about making it easier for partners in Ohio’s DD system to file and describe complaints with the introduction of a mobile application (app) including a new [DODD online complaint form](#). This new app allows health and welfare* complaints to be filed with DODD remotely, using a computer or smart phone.

At www.dodd.ohio.gov, click on the words ‘Report Abuse’ in the upper right corner, or use this link: <https://doddportal.dodd.ohio.gov/reportabuse/Pages/default.aspx>

The app is simple to download and allows users to file complaints regarding abuse, neglect, theft, and other categories of reporting. The information is then sent directly to the DODD MUI/Registry Unit and auto-generated to the appropriate County Board of DD or other applicable agency. In most cases, contacting the local County Board is the quickest and easiest way to log a complaint. If preferred, one may also call the DODD Abuse/Neglect Hotline at (866)313-6733 to share concerns. DODD Assistant Deputy Director Scott Phillips explains,

“We’re really excited about this mobile app. Reporting is a critical step in Ohio’s system to protect the health and welfare of individuals with developmental disabilities. Quality reports need to be shared, and often that means making the report quickly, before critical details could be forgotten.”

Once an incident is reported, Ohio’s DD system has strict requirements for investigation that include identifying cause and contributing factors, and implementing a prevention plan. MUI Unit staff member Connie McLaughlin adds, “Not only is this new online system a quick and easy way to report health and welfare concerns, but it offers the ability to store information and report on outcomes. And ... here’s what’s also exciting ... we will be collecting the data in a

new way that will be more effective for analysis and for tracking types of incidents, locations, individuals affected, and so on. We will be using this new data to improve our system.”

In addition, the new app allows for uploading photos or other documentation of an incident. “We’ve already seen some additional reporting that might otherwise have waited until later to be done,” says Phillips. He adds, “Advances in technology are making the reporting of incidents easier and more convenient. We really appreciate the efforts of DODD’s Information Technology (IT) team in making this happen. Ohio is in the forefront of this kind of advance in health and welfare reporting.”

For more information, contact the DODD MUI Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810. To offer feedback on DODD Mobile Applications, drop us a line at mobile.app@dodd.ohio.gov.

**While ‘Health & Safety’ and ‘Health & Welfare’ are similar, the ‘welfare’ of an individual is more all-encompassing than ‘safety,’ and will be the terminology transitioned to in the future.*

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6. May 7 Primary: Levy Issues for County Boards of DD

May 7 approaches! Voters in 74 Ohio counties will decide several local races and 354 local issues. A complete list of local issues appearing on the ballot is available [here](#) and at MyOhioVote.com. According to the [Secretary of State's website](#), there will be five levy issues affecting Ohio’s County Boards of Developmental Disabilities. They are:

- Delaware County: .56 mills, additional
- Henry County: 2 mills, replacement
- Knox County: 2.7 mills, renewal
- Lorain County: 1.6875 mills, replacement
- Stark County: 3.3 mills, renewal and increase -- combining two levies



Results of the May 7 County Board of DD levy issues will be reported on May 8th as a Pipeline EXTRA, prior to the release of that day’s regular issue of Pipeline.

The Secretary of State’s website at www.sos.state.oh.us/ contains information about the May 7 ballot issues as well as regarding voting in general, including specific information for Voters with Disabilities.

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PostScripts

APRIL IS MINORITY HEALTH MONTH!

Visit the *Ohio Commission on Minority Health* website to view the statewide calendar of events.
<http://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/actnow/>

FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING DATE CHANGED to JUNE 11

May 7 meeting cancelled, moved forward.

The previously-announced May 7 Family Advisory Council meeting has been moved to June 11. It remains at the Columbus Developmental Center, from 10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.. The meeting will include group discussions and a revised format offering more opportunities to learn and share information with other individuals and families from around the state. Contact Peggy Martin at peggy.martin@dodd.ohio.gov. FAC meetings are open to everyone with an interest in Ohio's DD community, and participation by individuals and families served is especially encouraged.

Employment First Conference June 4-5, 'Changing Expectations'

DODD and the Ohio Employment First Advisory Committee announce the inaugural Employment First Conference, "Changing Expectations" – at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin, June 4 and 5. The event will feature noted speakers and offer a platform for Employment First partners to discover answers and opportunities for a shift in expectations and stronger community employment outcomes.

Register for the conference at www.ohioemploymentfirst.org

Opening keynote speaker will be author Dale DiLeo, discussing, "*How do we begin to make the changes necessary to support and sustain Employment First?*" Sessions will cover topics including employer and community engagement, person-centered planning, interagency agreements, post-secondary options for students with DD, benefits planning, and using mobile technology to improve employment outcomes.

Conference Scholarships Available – Deadline to Request is May 24

Individuals with a disability or family members of individuals with a disability who wish to attend the Employment First Conference may request a scholarship to cover the registration fee. To request a scholarship, email Scholarship Committee Chair Donna Owens at donna_owens@ocali.org. Deadline for request is Friday, May 24 - *or* until scholarship funds have been spent - *or* until conference capacity is reached. Scholarships are limited!

People First Annual Meeting, May 4

The *People First of Ohio* annual meeting is May 4th at Roberts Convention Center in Wilmington Ohio, from 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. The annual meeting includes speeches and election of new board members for the statewide *People First of Ohio* organization. There also will be training on the *Employment First* initiative. Cost for lunch is \$20.00 per person.

Genetic Disorders & Epilepsy in Persons with DD, Training - May 9

For information and insight into genetic disorders that are not routinely taught in-depth in nursing school, this conference will discuss the following syndromes: Prader-Willi, Angelman, Fragile X, Cornelia de Lange, Down, 22q, Williams, Smith Magenis, PKU, and Tuberous Sclerosis Complex. Also covered will be epilepsy-related behaviors, diagnostic testing, management and treatment of seizures and epilepsy in persons with developmental disabilities. Keynote Speaker Terry Broda is a Nurse Practitioner from Canada who speaks to nurses at the national level on issues regarding DD. The training is sponsored by the Healthcare Advisory Committee. More at https://www.knoxdd.com/HAC_Conference_Brochure.pdf

The Arc of Ohio 'Day at Cedar Point' – May 22

The deadline to request free tickets is Friday, April 26. The Arc will consider all requests submitted by the deadline. Ticket requesters will be notified on April 30, and provided more details then.

Request your tickets by clicking here: <http://thearcofohiodayatcedarpoint2013.eventbrite.com>

This is an annual event for Ohioans with disabilities, their families, friends, providers, and support staff. The day is open to *everyone* and The Arc reports that approximately 10,000 people have attended this event each year, for decades. Cedar Point has donated a limited number of admission tickets and free picnic lunches again this year, and they will be distributed as fairly as possible. All others may participate for \$29.00, which is about half off the regular admission price. Purchased picnic lunches are \$9.95 each.

SAVE THE DATE! Direct Support Professionals Event, September 11

The Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (OADSP) announces that the fourth annual DSP Recognition Event at the Xenos Complex in Columbus will be held on September 11. A writer, and sibling to a sister with DD, Rachel Simon will be the keynote speaker, and the energetic Scott Osterfeld will again MC the event. DODD Director John Martin will speak, and several additional presenters and surprises are planned. More than 400 DSPs attended last year. Contact: Amy Gerowitz at (513) 484-2772 agerowitz@me.com or event coordinator Lisa Barnes, (866) 862-2322 LisaB4DSPs@yahoo.com.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! DisAbility Jobs Summit, October 8-9

The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) has announced the dates for this year's *DisAbility Jobs Summit* – October 8 and 9, at the Columbus Convention Center. This event will include program tracks that will offer educational experiences for all attendees. Details will be forthcoming as the dates draw nearer. Until then, mark your calendars for the 2013 *DisAbility Jobs Summit*.

WALK NOW FOR AUTISM SPEAKS – October 13

Join 'Autism Speaks' on Sunday, October 13, at Huntington Park in Columbus, and walk to change the future for people with autism. *Walk Now for Autism Speaks* is a family-friendly event and helps to fund research that will lead to answers surrounding the many questions posed by Autism Spectrum Disorder. Previous years' participants say, "Whether you strive to join the new "Grand Club" (walkers that raise \$1,000 or more), sell lemonade, or create your own unique event, you can become a part of the solution!" Contact Columbus@autismspeaks.org or call (216) 524-2842.

ADA Announces New Resource

The ADA National Network has announced a new resource booklet -- "*The Americans with Disabilities Act Questions and Answers*." The document is designed to provide answers to frequently-asked questions about the ADA. Produced by the 10 regional members of the ADA National Network, the information has been adapted from the 2008 booklet by the same name, produced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. The new resource is available on-line in HTML format with an option to download/print a PDF version at: www.adata.org

DODD Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)

To report abuse/neglect and other MUI's call toll-free **1-866-313-6733**. Note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of DD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict, or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances the hotline number is there to be used for reporting.

Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

Pipeline is an electronic publication of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), distributed at least twice monthly to update and inform readers of timely, relevant information affecting stakeholders in the developmental disabilities community. Share questions or comments about *Pipeline* at feedback@list.dodd.ohio.gov, or sherry.steinman@dodd.ohio.gov. *DODD values subscriber confidentiality and does not intentionally share subscriber addresses with others. However, in the event of a public records request, the DODD will comply with all applicable Public Records Laws.*

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