



News from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

John R. Kasich, Governor

John L. Martin, Director

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1. Funds Awarded to Improve Workers' Background Checks

Ohio Takes Next Steps to Improve Background Checks for Home-Health Workers

The Governor's Office of Health Transformation (OHT) has announced that Ohio has been awarded a \$2.1 million federal grant to improve criminal background checks for direct care workers in home- and community-based settings (HCBS). In addition, the Administration will match the federal funds, awarded through the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), with \$700,000 in state dollars.

The funds will be used to extend usage of the Ohio Attorney General's *Retained Applicant Fingerprint Database Information Exchange* system to individuals working as direct care providers. The electronic system will allow for simpler and more timely post-hiring background checks, improving safety for individuals who receive Medicaid services in their own home or other community-based setting, as well as saving time and money for taxpayers and agencies that provide home-health services. In making the announcement, OHT Director Greg Moody noted,

“Governor Kasich has championed the cause of providing Ohioans with more choice and better quality in long-term care. It is important that seniors and people with disabilities can trust the service providers that come into their homes. This program will help to ensure that home-based services are of the highest quality.”

Last year, OHT led an initiative among several state departments that identified new ways to enhance and streamline criminal background checks for HCBS providers. As a result, the state

has implemented improved and more uniform standards -- including a new requirement that direct care workers obtain post-hiring background checks at least every five years. This affects more than 100,000 workers in Ohio, primarily in Medicaid- and Medicare-funded settings.

The improved system monitors and reports post-hiring convictions in real time, allowing offenders with disqualifying convictions to be removed from their jobs immediately.

Attorney General Mike DeWine recently explained, “Now this office will be able to immediately notify employers of a home-care worker’s arrest or conviction. This is extremely important as we work with the Governor's Office of Health Transformation to help ensure the safety of individuals receiving home and community-based services.”

While coordination and oversight of the project will be led by OHT and Ohio Medicaid, the Ohio Attorney General's Office will be responsible for building and monitoring the electronic system’s increased capacity. The departments of Developmental Disabilities, Aging, Health, and Mental Health also will help in implementing the new background check policies.

More at www.healthtransformation.ohio.gov

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2. Jobs Budget 2.0 – Still Moving Through the System

Discussions in the Ohio legislature regarding a Medicaid system overhaul are well underway, and lawmakers in the Chamber's *Healthier Ohio Working Group* met for the second time last Tuesday to examine previous system changes, as well as telemedicine options. Legislative leaders have indicated a willingness to further discuss options to the expansion of Medicaid services proposed by Governor John Kasich, and review the many issues surrounding such expansion within the state, under the federal Affordable Care Act.

According to the Governor’s Office, decisions should be made by June 30, 2013, for any expansion to begin January 1, 2014. Leaders in the House and Senate also recently have stated that consideration is being given to extending Medicaid service coverage in a more limited way, through legislation. While mindful of the Governor’s original budget proposal, the General Assembly currently is approaching the issue from a broader ‘reform’ and oversight perspective.

The executive budget bill returns to the Senate Finance Committee this week as deliberations on amendments continue prior to the expected introduction of a substitute bill next week. The Finance Committee has scheduled meetings to hear subcommittee reports today, and tomorrow will continue further testimony on the budget. Standing subcommittees have been created to discuss education, Medicaid, and general government topics addressing specific portions of the budget ([House Bill 59](#).)

Also addressing Medicaid expansion, *Policy Matters Ohio* released a summary brief of research this week, suggesting that health outcomes would improve under coverage extension. According to the brief, research has shown that expansion would result in improved access to preventative care, increased health care access in rural areas, and creating an environment in which public health benefits affect improved public safety and security.

Governor 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. 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.

More at www.healthtransformation.gov

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[Coming Soon! June 4-5](#)

3. Employment First Conference, Changing Expectations

DODD, the Ohio Employment First Advisory Committee, and other planning partners are putting the finishing touches on the inaugural Employment First Conference, “Changing Expectations” – to be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin, June 4 and 5. The event will feature several speakers and offer a platform for Employment First partners to discover many opportunities for a positive shift in expectations, and stronger community employment outcomes.



Every Person. Every Talent. Every Opportunity.

The Vision of Employment First builds upon the Mission of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to continually improve the quality of life for Ohio’s citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.

The conference’s keynote speakers will be author Dale DiLeo, President of Training Resource Network in St. Augustine, FL, discussing, *“How do we begin to make the changes necessary to support and sustain Employment First?”*, as well as a unique perspective offered by David Hoff, Program Director for the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, and President of the national organization, APSE – the Association of People Supporting Employment First.

Sessions will address 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. In welcoming participants to the event, DODD Director John Martin writes in his welcome letter prepared for the conference program ...

“We don’t have to be limited in our own thinking, or in the thinking we encourage among those we serve, about what is safe and what opportunities people should consider pursuing. That’s why our theme for this conference is Changing Expectations — because that’s the foundation we must build to make Ohio an Employment First state. And, it starts with us as a state and a system making the connection that every individual can and should expect to explore what he or she can do.”

DODD appreciates the leadership and contributions of all of the conference planning partners and taskforce agencies: the Ohio departments of Education, Job & Family Services, and Mental Health, and the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission. In addition to state agency cooperation, Employment First benefits from an Advisory Committee of leaders aligned with all

aspects of support and service within the DD system, including self-advocates, educators, providers, and County Boards of DD.

Conference planners note that the event's advance registration is now closed, and those who have registered are in for a first-rate opportunity to network and make new connections geared toward improving the employment scene for Ohioans with disabilities.

[More information about the conference is at http://ohioemploymentfirst.org/](http://ohioemploymentfirst.org/)

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4. EEOC Issues Guidance Regarding Workers with DD

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) -- tasked with enforcing the nation's employment discrimination laws -- is taking further steps to clarify the rights of people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace. In a [document](#) released this week, the EEOC attempts to simplify the sometimes confusing laws surrounding worker rights and workplace accommodations.

In "Questions & Answers about Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)," the EEOC addresses what employers can and cannot ask about a person's intellectual disability, and what accommodations may be requested.

The EEOC also released similar information this week addressing concerns specific to those with cancer, diabetes, and epilepsy. Each of the documents takes into account all updates to the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) in recent years. Agency officials note that while there is a lot of general information available about the ADA, the EEOC often is asked questions about how the ADA applies to these conditions in day-to-day situations. The recently released information (also at www.ada.gov) is in response to public requests from employers and employees alike.

More at: [View "Disability Discrimination, The Question and Answer Series"](#)

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5. OACB Names New Executive Director, Bridget Gargan

The Ohio Association of County Boards Serving People with Developmental Disabilities (OACB) has named Bridget Gargan the organization's new Executive Director, effective July 8.



[Bridget Gargan](#)

Gargan currently is Vice President of Government Affairs for the Ohio Hospital Association, a position she has held for eleven years. There, she has been responsible for state-level advocacy and representation within the legislative and executive branches.



In addition, OACB's soon-to-be Executive Director has been active in community organizations including volunteer leadership positions with United Cerebral Palsy, Inc. of Central Ohio, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society/Mid-Ohio Chapter, and Amethyst, a long-term drug and alcohol treatment center located in Columbus.

The OACB Board of Trustees notes that prior to beginning in the Executive Director position, Gargan will attend the evening hospitality event at the OACB Spring Conference on May 23 at the Hilton/Polaris in Columbus. More about the conference, and about Gargan's appointment is at: www.oacb.org.

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6. Summer Weather Health & Safety Information

The DODD Division of Legal & Oversight, Major Unusual Incident (MUI) Unit provides this timely information along with other safety agency partners, including the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness (OCSWA), the National Weather Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).



Heat Awareness Day, May 24, is a national public awareness effort focused on the dangers of extreme heat, alertness to the signs of heat emergencies, and how to stay safe during extreme heat conditions.

A case in point in terms of a need for preparedness occurred in June and July of last year, when Ohio was introduced to an unusual severe weather incident, the 'derecho,' (a widespread, long-lived wind storm) that caused massive power outages. And, while the power was out, the state experienced a heat wave pushing temperatures above 100 degrees. Across the state numerous issues were faced by individuals, families, and other caregivers, and it is hoped that lessons were learned for preparedness this year.

Knowing what to do before severe weather strikes can save lives. [DODD Health & Welfare Alerts*](#) (formerly 'Health and Safety' Alerts) provide critical information to caregivers in areas in which DODD has identified a risk to individuals' health and welfare. Alerts provide data, additional resources, and guidance regarding what can be done to avoid or minimize risk.

Ohio's health and safety system for the statewide DD community is built on incident prevention, providing timely care when needed, and appropriate reporting.

The best way to guard against heat-related issues is preparedness and prevention.

The below information offers a few helpful reminders for extreme heat conditions:

- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothes that cover most of the body.
- Limit intake of caffeinated or alcoholic beverages. They can add to dehydration.
- Drink two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
- Check on family, friends, and neighbors who may not have air conditioning or are alone.

- Never leave children or pets alone in vehicles.

**In addition to Health & Welfare Alerts, there is a wealth of related information for people with developmental disabilities and their families on the DODD website at www.dodd.ohio.gov. Click on the Health & Safety tab at the top of the Home page and select from the subjects shown in the drop-down window. For questions/comments regarding Alerts, contact the MUI/Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810.*

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7. National Foster Care Month Spotlights ‘Home Sharing’

“You Can Change a Lifetime!”

National Foster Care Awareness Month spotlights the experiences of the more than 400,000 children in the national foster care system, and encourages people to become foster or adoptive parents, volunteers, mentors, employers, or serve in other support roles. Service providers around the state focus attention this month on the fact that not only are children in need of good foster homes, but so are more than 100,000 adults who have developmental disabilities. Through various hardships or other circumstances beyond their control, many adults with developmental disabilities find themselves in need of a ‘family home,’ as well.

The ‘Home Sharing’ concept emphasizes the value, and the day-to-day support that ‘adult foster care’ or ‘adult foster support’ provides -- rather than focusing on the funding stream’s billing code language (Medicaid’s ‘Adult Foster Care’). A good Home Sharing situation follows these guidelines:

- Screening/matching methods between individuals and host families for compatibility;
- *Requiring* background checks for all adults who live in the home;
- Pre-home visitation. Homes must be clean, plumbing and electrical systems must be modern, and homes must have smoke detectors and marked fire exits;
- Staff training that is individual-specific, and emphasizes community engagement;
- A system for oversight must be in place, and back-up coverage for emergencies;
- Respite available for the Host Family.

Learn more about National Foster Care Month at www.fostercaremonth.org/
Click on rule 5123:2-9-33 for language on the subject of Home- and Community-Based Services.



During National Foster Care Month, DODD salutes the many foster care families and other individual mentors who offer outstanding care to individuals with and without disabilities, in a supportive environment.

At left is Marsha Mace, who is lovin' her home in Southeast Ohio, along with her cat, Yum-Yum.
Read more about Marsha in ...

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PostScripts

NEXT FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, June 11 - New Format!

The next Family Advisory Council meeting will be June 11 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 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.

HEALTH CARE SUMMIT – June 10

A health care summit titled, “Making Health Care Reform Work for People with Developmental Disabilities” will be held on June 10th from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., at the Fawcett Center, 2400 Olentangy River Road, in Columbus. There is no cost to attend. Individuals with developmental disabilities, family members and other advocates, insurers, policy makers, and researchers are invited to discuss practical ways for improving health care for individuals with developmental disabilities. The summit will include a presentation of focus group and survey findings, as well as facilitated roundtable discussions. Registration is limited! Click [Here](#) to sign up for the event. *Deadline to register is June 5th*. For more information, contact Barry Jamieson barry.jamieson@osumc.edu or (614) 366-0329 for more information.

SAVE THE DATE! Direct Support Professionals Event, September 11

The Ohio Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (OADSP) fourth annual DSP Recognition Event will be at the Xenos Complex in Columbus, on September 11. Rachel Simon, a writer, and sibling to a sister with DD, will be the keynote speaker. 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. The event theme is *Direct Support Professionals Help Create Life Stories*, and DSP's will have an opportunity to share stories of the great work they do -- see [Directions for sharing videos](#). To register go to www.dspaths.org. Contact: Amy Gerowitz, (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.

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 ...

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