

2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The 132nd General Assembly presents Ohio with an opportunity to lead the national conversation around health care reform. As the federal government deliberates next steps to "repeal and replace" the Affordable Care Act, Ohio must continue to transform its health care delivery system, while also preserving the improvements made at the state-level in recent years.

Sustain, Improve, and Strengthen Ohio's Health Insurance Markets

OAHF's member plans are committed to delivering high quality, affordable coverage to all Ohioans. To achieve this, Ohio's private and public health insurance markets must be healthy and highly competitive. Lawmakers should advocate for policies that support market stability, state flexibility and public/private innovations and regulatory reform. By pursuing innovative solutions that enhance health outcomes, bolster accountability, and address the underlying costs of health care, we will be able to further lead Ohio toward a more value-based market.

Address the Underlying Drivers of Health Care Costs

Ohio's health care consumers continue to experience rising premiums despite federal efforts to reform the health insurance market. This is because insurance costs are a direct reflection of the costs charged for health care products and services rendered by providers across the delivery system. Until we tackle rapid growth among the primary drivers of health care, curbing insurance costs will remain a challenge. Pharmacy costs, provider costs, coverage mandates, taxes and fees, and other factors make up these underlying cost drivers - collectively contributing to the expenses paid by insured Ohioans. Working to understand the impact of these underlying cost drivers is a complex - and very necessary - task. However, we must examine and address the various factors, to achieve greater stability in Ohio's health insurance market.

Leverage the Use of Private Industry

Ohio's public and private health insurance markets greatly rely on private industry to ensure continuous improvement and transformation in the health care space. Health insurers are driving accountability by improving outcomes and empowering consumers to make more informed decisions about their care. Additionally, health plans are leading with strategies to incentivize accessing care in the right place at the right time. The State of Ohio relies on private sector plans to insure its Medicaid population. This approach has proven successful in helping the State to manage costs, coordinate care, improve quality, and pursue a more value-based health care delivery system. Today, roughly 86 percent of Medicaid beneficiaries are covered by managed care plans. OAHF believes there are additional opportunities to extend the expertise and resources of private industry into the public and commercial health care markets and supports efforts to further expand choice for consumers.

Create Transparency Across the Health Care Delivery System

Purchasers of health care deserve to know the price tags associated with the services they buy. Such information is critical to individuals and families attempting to make informed and deliberate decisions about the cost, quality, and setting of their health care. Today, in addition to complying with a myriad of state and federal transparency laws and regulations, Ohio's plans have proactively developed consumer transparency tools to help meet consumer demand. OAHF understands the importance of health care cost information and supports policy initiatives that arm consumers with information about the price and quality of the health care services they purchase. This information is key to empowering individuals to make better decisions about their overall care. Ohio lawmakers must address these issues to better position our health care delivery system for the future.

Drive Better Population Health Outcomes

Insurers are no longer just payers of claims. Plans are working to address the population health challenges facing Ohio. The ongoing opiate epidemic is at the forefront of these challenges, and Ohio remains at the center of this national crisis. Though recent years have seen various efforts to curb opiate abuse across our state, OAHF believes reducing the overall number of opioids prescribed is the best tactic to combat the crisis. Ohio's families and communities would be well-served if policymakers were to adopt the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) guideline for prescribing opioids for chronic pain. Such an approach emphasizes non-opioid approaches, as well as giving deference to the lowest possible effective dosage when opioids are believed to be needed. Additionally, the fight against opiate abuse would be supported by providing broader to payers, providers and payers in surrounding states access to the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS) to further ensure that such prescriptions are being provided safely and appropriately.