



Governor's Office of Health Transformation

John R. Kasich, Governor

Greg Moody, Director

Reactions to Controlling Board Medicaid Expansion Vote

AARP Ohio

"AARP Ohio thanks the state Controlling Board for accepting federal funding to extend Medicaid coverage to Ohioans who work in low-wage jobs with no health insurance," said Jane Taylor, AARP Ohio state director.

"We commend Gov. John Kasich for his resolute commitment to ensure that Ohio did not lose this opportunity to grant access to health coverage to adults who struggle to make ends meet. His heart-felt advocacy will see hundreds of thousands of Ohioans gain the coverage that will protect and improve their health.

"We also thank legislative leaders -- state Sen. Tom Sawyer, state Rep. Chris Redfern, state Sen. Chris Widener, and state Rep. Ross McGregor -- whose votes as members of the Controlling Board will see Medicaid extended to cover Ohioans in their 50s and 60s who had been denied coverage only because they don't have dependent children.

"In the end, all of us will benefit when fellow Ohioans can get the physical and mental health care they need."

Advocates for Ohio's Future

"The decision to expand Medicaid strengthens families and communities across Ohio," says Will Petrik, state director for Advocates for Ohio's Future. "This decision will make Ohioans more competitive as access to health care allows workers to manage chronic conditions, handle health emergencies without facing financial ruin, and stay in the workforce."

"We are proud of the hard work of our supporters, partners, and the organizers of the Healthy Ohioans Coalition," said Gayle Channing Tenenbaum, co-chair of Advocates for Ohio's Future. "Thousands of Ohioans have rallied at the Statehouse, sent emails, made calls, and gathered signatures to support health care expansion in Ohio. We would not have a 'yes' vote today without this overwhelming support."

Mark Davis, co-chair of Advocates for Ohio's Future, said, "We also extend our thanks to Gov. Kasich, who has been a tireless champion of Medicaid expansion, to President Faber, to Speaker Batchelder, to the Democratic Caucus and to the many members of the Legislature who have offered paths to expansion. Thank you for sharing our vision of a stronger, healthier Ohio."

American Cancer Society

"Ohio has an opportunity to provide thousands of currently uninsured people with lifesaving health coverage through Medicaid, and public sentiment is decidedly in favor of using available federal dollars to pay for it. Today's decision by the Controlling Board to increase access to health coverage through Ohio's Medicaid program will guarantee that families across the state will have the security of knowing they have access to proven cancer screenings and treatments they otherwise could not afford," said Jeff Stephens, Ohio state policy director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. "Beginning next year, Medicaid will offer a defined set of essential benefits to prevent and treat a serious disease such as cancer. Improving access to Medicaid coverage in Ohio will save lives and reduce health care costs, which are an increasing burden on our state."

CareSource

"CareSource, a nonprofit, Ohio-based health plan, commends the Kasich administration and legislators on the State Controlling Board for doing the right thing. Today's decision is a great moment for more than 275,000 Ohioans who will get access to health care Jan. 1," said Pam Morris, CEO of CareSource.

"We all benefit from Ohioans' receiving health care coverage through Medicaid expansion. Providing access to health care for citizens who need it most, results in better health care outcomes, saves lives and taxpayer dollars. The investment made to help individuals and families take responsibility for primary and preventative care reduces the cost of uncompensated care. When we invest in people the benefits return to our communities through robust economic development."

County Commissioners Association of Ohio

"The County Commissioners Association of Ohio would like to express appreciation for the efforts taken by Gov. Kasich and the members of the Controlling Board who voted today to implement Medicaid expansion," stated CCAO Executive Director Suzanne Dulaney. "With an expansion, Medicaid will pay for many people who otherwise would have received health care funded entirely at county expense. We look forward to working with the General Assembly and the administration to ensure implementation in a pragmatic manner with adequate safeguards for Ohio's taxpayers should the federal government reimbursement rates change."

CCAO President and Union County Commissioner Gary Lee said, "A key component from the county perspective is anticipation of smarter coverage for Medicaid-eligible individuals in the custody of the county court system in order to bring down county inmate medical costs. Expansion should also allow us to address addiction and mental illness more appropriately than by default in the county court system. While there are certainly aspects of the Affordable Care Act that cause concern for several of our members, Medicaid expansion implemented prudently should benefit Ohio through an improved approach to health care for the uninsured. We look forward to working with the administration and the Ohio General Assembly to implement Medicaid expansion in a way that makes sense for Ohio."

Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies

"The Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies commends Gov. John Kasich for successfully pursuing the expansion of Medicaid, and the members of the Controlling Board for agreeing to accept federal dollars for this program. We appreciate that the governor and members of the Controlling Board acknowledge that Medicaid expansion is the morally and economically responsible thing to do for Ohioans," stated Philip E. Cole, executive director of OACAA.

"The governor and Controlling Board recognize that Medicaid expansion will help our most vulnerable citizens get the medical care they deserve and will help stimulate Ohio's economy. Bringing over \$13 billion in federal funding to Ohio will increase preventative care and reduce emergency care and its associated costs, and increase Ohio's investment in mental health and addiction treatment services.

"Extending coverage to over 275,000 Ohioans will provide a healthy, more productive workforce. The federal funding can spur economic growth while helping hospitals maintain costs and keep them from passing the costs of treating the uninsured to those who pay premiums.

"The message is, Medicaid expansion is a win-win situation for everyone," Cole said. "We appreciate that our governor and the Controlling Board see the benefits and are working to strengthen Ohio, both its citizens and its economy, by expanding Medicaid."

Ohio Association of Community Health Centers (OACHC)

"Today's decision by the Controlling Board is a great victory for the 275,000 uninsured Ohioans who on January 1, 2014 will gain access to coverage. Uninsured veterans and the 50,000 citizens of Ohio with unmet mental health and substance abuse needs will be well served by the today's decision. We who support this decision ... owe a debt of gratitude to Gov. John Kasich and the members of the Controlling

Board for their historic decision," said Randy Runyon, CEO of the Ohio Association of Community Health Centers.

"The work to improve Medicaid has progressed rapidly under Gov. Kasich, Office of Health Transformation Director Greg Moody and Medicaid Director John McCarthy and we must continue to work to improve this vital program.

OACHC is committed to work with the administration and the Ohio General Assembly in making sure the Ohio Medicaid Program is the best in the country in serving the needs of low income Ohioans as well as providing great value to all Ohio taxpayers.

"As key providers of care to the uninsured, once Medicaid is extended, Ohio's 41 community health centers will all be better equipped to provide more comprehensive care to prevent disease from developing, appropriate management of chronic conditions when they do present, with an overall decreased reliance on more expensive hospital emergency and inpatient care.

"There are approximately 1.3 million uninsured Ohioans and by opening the door and covering more Ohioans, our state has a historic opportunity to improve health and safety, create appropriate primary care capacity, provide a major boost to our economy while reducing the cost of uncompensated care and continue important reforms already underway."

Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities

"I want to acknowledge Gov. John Kasich for his resolution and steadfastness in expanding Medicaid in Ohio, and thank the Controlling Board for voting to approve the necessary spending authority. This expansion is a win for over 275,000 Ohioans who will now have access to needed healthcare coverage. This will be particularly helpful to the over 60,000 individuals battling addiction and 55,000 Ohioans living with mental illness who will now have access to life-saving physical and behavioral health care services," said Cheri Walter, CEO of the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities.

"I want to specifically extend my appreciation to Sen. Chris Widener and Rep. Ross McGregor, both of whom represent my board area, for standing up to support this spending authority request. With this vote, they demonstrated their courage and commitment to the health of Ohio and for that I want to ensure that they know the entire behavioral health community thanks them," said Kent Youngman, the association's president and CEO of the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Clarke, Green and Madison Counties.

Ohio Association of Health Plans

"Today's Controlling Board approval increasing the appropriation authority to allow for the extension of Medicaid coverage to 275,000 Ohioans is welcomed news. The Ohio Association of Health Plans commends Gov. John Kasich for his perseverance and commitment to make access to life-altering health insurance coverage available to so many of our fellow citizens," said Miranda Motter, president of the Ohio Association of Health Plans.

"Along with increased access to health care, responsible payment reform and transparency become critical components for continued reforms in the state of Ohio. OAHF member plans will continue to advocate for policies that will ensure the ongoing sustainable success and transformation of the state's health care system."

Ohio Bleeding Disorders Council

"We appreciate the governor's leadership to expand Medicaid coverage to low-income uninsured Ohioans. We applaud the Controlling Board's vote that enables the administration to increase Medicaid eligibility to 138 percent of the federal poverty level.

"Access to health care is critical for children and adults managing hemophilia and other bleeding disorders. We know that chronic disease patients with Medicaid health coverage have better health outcomes than uninsured patients.

"Expanding Medicaid for low-income adults to 138 percent of poverty will ensure that children transitioning from Medicaid will continue to have access to the care they need. It will help low-income working adults have access to health coverage so they can continue working rather than become eligible for Medicaid coverage through disability."

Ohio Chamber of Commerce

"The Ohio Chamber supports Medicaid expansion as being in the best interests of Ohio's employers. So, today we commend Gov. Kasich for his persistence in pushing for expansion and the Controlling Board for its action to approve the appropriation," said Keith Lake, Ohio Chamber of Commerce vice president of governmental affairs.

"While we opposed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) from the start because it does little to address the real problem in health care -- affordability -- expansion will help mitigate one of ACA's harmful effects by protecting employers from some of the law's penalties. Similarly, failing to do so would only exacerbate the problem of cost shifting that already raises employer health insurance premiums.

"Our members share the concerns many have about Medicaid costs. However, the best way to reduce Medicaid expenditures is to relentlessly focus on creating a business climate that leads to stronger private sector job growth -- something we know both Gov. Kasich and the General Assembly are committed to."

Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage

"Today is an historic day for the more than 275,000 low-income Ohioans who will have access to Medicaid coverage on Jan. 1, 2014. For these Ohioans, today's vote by the Controlling Board brings peace of mind that coverage and better access to health care are around the corner," said Col Owens and Cathy Levine, co-chairs of Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage.

"We applaud Gov. Kasich's tenacity and willingness to explore all options to extend coverage. We appreciate the vote of the Controlling Board to authorize the receipt of federal funds to carry out the expansion.

"Expanding Medicaid is the right thing to do for Ohio and has the support of the public as well as the support of hospitals, doctors, insurers, business, grassroots consumer groups and other advocates for low-income Ohioans.

"As advocates for quality health care for all Ohioans, we will continue our work to educate uninsured Ohioans about their options and opportunities for coverage."

Ohio Manufacturers Association

"Ohio manufacturers thank Gov. Kasich for his leadership on the issue of expanding Medicaid eligibility in Ohio and also those members of the Ohio General Assembly serving on the state Controlling Board who today voted in favor of the governor's Medicaid expansion proposal. Simply put, this was the right decision at the right time for our fellow Ohioans in need and for the future health and prosperity of our state," said Eric Burkland, president of the Ohio Manufacturers Association. "The OMA also encourages Ohio's elected officials to continue to explore ideas that mitigate impacts on the federal debt and to contain Ohio's Medicaid costs in future years."

Ohio Provider Resource Association

"Today's vote by the Ohio Controlling Board to approve the extension of health care benefits to an estimated 366,000 Ohioans (with a net of 275,000 with adjustments for recent eligibility changes) represents good government in action. This decision to allow federal funds to be used to provide health care to over many low-wage Ohioans, strengthens Ohio's workforce, brings \$13 billion into the state, and will create over 30,000 jobs in Ohio over the next 10 years. Simply put, extending Medicaid coverage to such a large number of our fellow citizens is the right thing to do for our state," said Mark Davis, president of the Ohio Provider Resource Association.

"The Ohio Provider Resource Association commends Gov. John Kasich for his unwavering support of

Medicaid extension. We also thank President Faber, Speaker Batchelder and the Democratic Caucus for their help in securing this approval for Medicaid extension. And OPRA salutes the members of the Controlling Board who voted for this historic initiative: Sen. Chris Widener Rep. Ross McGregor, Sen. Tom Sawyer, Rep. Chris Redfern and Board President Randy Cole.

"OPRA members and staff have worked hard all year long in support of Medicaid extension. Going forward, we are prepared to do anything in our power to assist the Kasich administration as it takes the steps necessary to prepare for start-up of extension on Jan. 1, 2014. We also recognize that legislative and legal challenges are possible and are prepared to address those as the need arises.

"Medicaid extension is of high importance to our provider organizations and their workers. Many of our members' direct support professionals earn incomes under 138 percent of the federal poverty level and live without health care benefits. They live and work every day, being one serious illness or injury away from financial ruin. A large number of them almost certainly will qualify to receive life-altering Medicaid coverage. In addition, extension will bring relief to our providers, who were facing an Affordable Care Act mandate for employer-sponsored health care that is estimated to cost members \$20 million annually.

"The debate over whether to expand Medicaid coverage was as healthy as it was hard-fought. OPRA believes that Gov. Kasich and the Controlling Board have acted wisely and courageously and, without question, in the best interests of our fellow citizens."

Policy Matters Ohio

"Medicaid expansion is a victory for all of Ohio. The state Controlling Board's decision today to grant appropriation authority means that 366,000 low-income workers in Ohio will now be able to see a doctor for preventive care. This will help reduce health-care costs as more Ohioans live healthier, more productive lives. Ohio's hospitals -- particularly in rural places and central cities -- will be protected from severe financial strain as national health reform moves forward.

"Controlling Board approval makes \$2.56 billion in federal funds available over the next two years. This investment in Ohio's health care needs will facilitate treatment in mental health and addiction services, and help meet many other needs. The federal government will pay 100 percent of the cost of the Medicaid expansion in the first three years of the program before a phased-in reduction to 90 percent in 2022. This is a much higher share than the 64 percent federal match in other program areas.

"These new federal dollars will have a spin-off economic impact, making this a good financial deal for the state. Ohio will see 28,000 new jobs spread across all 88 counties, according to data provided by Ohio State University and its partners. Local governments will see more than \$40 million in new revenues.

"The bottom-line benefit will be healthier, happier lives for Ohioans, an improvement that will benefit individuals, families and communities. We congratulate Gov. John Kasich and his staff, the members of the Controlling Board, and the advocacy community that has worked tirelessly for this victory."

Service Employees International Union District 1199

"Working people across Ohio need affordable, accessible healthcare without the fear of losing coverage based on the outcome of the next election," said Becky Williams, president of the Service Employees International Union District 1199 and partner on the Healthy Ohioans Work ballot campaign to expand Medicaid. "We cannot allow the fate of health care coverage for 275,000 working Ohioans to be a bargaining chip. Medicaid expansion is about people -- not politics.

"SEIU District 1199 WV/KY/OH fully supports the decision of the Ohio Controlling Board approving the administration's proposal for Medicaid Expansion, even though it is only a temporary solution and will create a health care cliff for working Ohioans on June 30, 2015.

"Medicaid expansion is the best choice for our families, our economy and our workers. Fully implementing Obamacare in Ohio through Medicaid expansion will provide health care for at least 275,000 working Ohioans, create 28,000 jobs and add billions to our state and local economy."

"The futile efforts of extremists to block the expansion of Medicaid should be dismissed quickly. The health and well-being of 275,000 Ohioans is far more important than ideological debates of the Affordable Care Act."

Voices for Ohio's Children

"As Voices takes a moment to recognize this great moment, we realize that on Jan. 1 Ohioans who never had access to health care coverage will have it for the first time. This decision will provide access to health care that protects the health and financial security of working families. Because of the Controlling Board's action, children, older adults, and people with disabilities can get the health care they need like check-ups, medicine, hospital and nursing home care and long-term support. We praise Gov. Kasich's commitment to expanding health care access to 275,000 insured Ohio's through Medicaid. He, his administration and leadership at the Ohio Department of Medicaid have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with advocates to educate and inform Ohioans of the benefits of Medicaid expansion to the state," said Sandy Oxley, CEO of Voices for Ohio's Children.

"Children only have one childhood. They deserve to grow up healthy. Children can win big when policy makers make the right choices. The Controlling Board made the right choice. We are delighted that Ohio, through the leadership of Gov. Kasich and those courageous legislators who approved the request on the Controlling Board, will give children a chance to grow up in families that will now have the security of knowing that they can get lifesaving care when they need it without the fear of facing huge looming medical bills. Ohio has capitalized on an opportunity to bring more families than ever before into health coverage. More than \$23.8 billion in additional federal funds will flow into Ohio's economy through 2019. We pause to celebrate the victory today! But more important than a climactic moment, Voices remains steadfast in working on the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act and getting kids enrolled."