



The MetroHealth System applauds Ohio Medicaid for easing access to Medicaid for pregnant women and children

Dr. Brian Mercer, Chair of OB/GYN at The MetroHealth System released the following statement expressing his gratitude to state leaders for changing the eligibility policy for expecting mother's and their children:

"The State of Ohio's effort to expand and improve the Medicaid eligibility program will speed up access to care for uninsured pregnant women and children. These families often have difficulty accessing health care, and this initiative will help break down this barrier for our patients. Our thanks go out to Governor Kasich, Director Moody and Director McCarthy for selecting The MetroHealth System to participate in this important effort to improve the health outcomes of expecting mothers and their children."

The MetroHealth System is a comprehensive academic healthcare system which has served as the safety net public hospital for Northeast Ohio for 175 years. MetroHealth has a nationally renowned Level I trauma and burn center and an acclaimed critical-care transport program – Metro Life Flight. MetroHealth's network of community health centers incorporates a patient-centered medical home team care approach to optimize patient outcomes through chronic disease management. MetroHealth is in the top 4% of hospitals in the U.S. to achieve Magnet® recognition for a second time. Magnet® is the nation's highest honor for nursing excellence. Founded in 1837, MetroHealth has been a major affiliate of Case Western Reserve University since 1914 and all MetroHealth active physician staff hold faculty appointments at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Each year, MetroHealth provides nearly one million inpatient and outpatient visits – with overall revenue of \$700 million. For more information on The MetroHealth System, visit www.MetroHealth.org.

175
years of caring for our community



DATE: June 5, 2012

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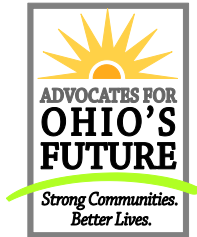
**OHIO LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO
EXPAND AND IMPROVE PRESUMPTIVE ELIGIBILITY**

Comments from Randy Runyon, President and CEO, OACHC:

On behalf of OACHC and our member Health Centers, I applaud Governor Kasich and members of his Administration for embedding presumptive eligibility into our local communities, where a real opportunity exists to reach the hardest to find/hardest to reach children and pregnant women.

According to the Centers for Children and Families, selecting and locating the right presumptive eligibility partners is one of the most important decisions in implementing this policy. Ohio's Federally Qualified Health Centers and FQHC Look-alikes are the largest component of the health care safety net for low-income, uninsured children and pregnant women. By deeming FQHCs and Look-Alikes as qualified entities, Health Centers are uniquely positioned to utilize their strengths as community-based and primary care providers, and Ohio will no doubt be able to reach and enroll a significant number of uninsured children and pregnant women through Presumptive Eligibility.

The Ohio Association of Community Health Centers represents all of Ohio's 39 Federally Qualified Health Centers and FQHC Look-Alikes (commonly referred to as Community Health Centers) delivering quality care at 165 sites throughout the state. Designed to be an effective primary care safety net, Ohio's Health Centers have achieved an unparalleled record of stability, cost-effectiveness, and quality improvement as they have grown to serve a half million Ohioans annually.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 5, 2012

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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.

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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.