



## Governor's Office of Health Transformation

**John R. Kasich**, Governor

**Greg Moody**, Director

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### **Office of Health Transformation Announces HHS Agency Legislative Liaison Team**

COLUMBUS – Today Greg Moody, director of the Governor's Office of Health Transformation (OHT), named a new team of legislative liaisons for the state agencies in the health and human services cluster: Aging (ODA); Health (ODH); Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS); Mental Health (ODMH); Developmental Disabilities (ODODD); and Job and Family Services (ODJFS).

These experienced professionals will serve as liaisons for their respective state agencies with state and federal legislators. They will also work closely with OHT to implement legislative changes to modernize the state's fragmented Medicaid program and implement Medicaid quality and cost-containment strategies.

"Unless we make changes in the system, taxpayers' share of ODJFS Medicaid expenditures will increase 49 percent, or \$1.6 billion, in the next fiscal year," Moody said. "That is simply unsustainable in the current budget. These new liaisons will help us work with the legislature to implement solutions that make our health system more efficient and help get Medicaid spending under control."

"Each and every member of this team has extensive experience working with the legislature, with Medicaid and on the other issues that are the responsibility of their respective agencies," said Élise Spriggs, OHT's director of government affairs. "The quality of this team shows how much we value our partnership with the legislature in modernizing Medicaid and improving Ohio's health system."

#### **Melissa Bacon, Director of Legislative Affairs, Department of Job and Family Services**

Melissa Bacon will oversee all legislative activities for ODJFS, which provides Medicaid benefits to approximately 2.2 million Ohioans annually. Bacon holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the Ohio State University and recently served as director of public policy and advocacy for the Ohio Children's Hospital Association after working for 14 years as a policy aide in the Ohio Senate.

#### **Dan Fitzpatrick, Legislative Liaison, Department of Job and Family Services**

Dan Fitzpatrick will manage legislative affairs related to unemployment compensation, workforce development, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Controlling Board for ODJFS. Fitzpatrick, a graduate of Wittenberg University, has 14 years of state and federal legislative relations experience, most recently as a legislative agent for the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association and the Ohio State Firefighters' Association.

**Aaron Crooks, Legislative Liaison, Department of Job and Family Services**

Aaron Crooks will manage legislative affairs for ODJFS's Office of Ohio Health Plans, which is leading the OHT initiative to improve care coordination. Crooks has served as a legislative aide to former State Senator Steve Stivers and a health policy assistant to Senate Presidents Tom Niehaus and Bill Harris.

**Tony Coder, Legislative Liaison, Department of Job and Family Services**

Tony Coder will continue to serve ODJFS as a legislative liaison, leading the department's constituent affairs section. Coder has been with the department since 2006, serving as the department's director of constituent affairs and most recently as assistant deputy director of external affairs.

**Carrie Baker, Legislative Liaison, Department of Job and Family Services**

Carrie Baker will manage legislative affairs related to child welfare, child support, child care and children's health quality initiatives at ODJFS. Baker has a bachelor's degree in political science from the Ohio State University. Since 2005, she has consulted for associations focused on child and family health care, human services, workforce issues, insurance and education, forming her own firm, Baker Nonprofit Management, in April 2008.

**Steven (Steve) R. Wermuth, Chief Operating Officer, Department of Health**

As chief operating officer, Steve Wermuth will oversee all of the department's internal business operations and partner with other state departments to ensure a smooth transition into the next phase of Ohio's health transformation. Wermuth previously owned his own government policy consulting business and served as health commissioner in Tuscarawas and Clark Counties.

**Erika Cybulskis, Legislative Liaison, Department of Health**

Erika Cybulskis, a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, brings 12 years of experience working in the Ohio General Assembly to her role as legislative liaison. Cybulskis has served as a legislative aide to members of the Senate and House Finance Committees during five biennial operating budgets.

**Zach Haughwout, Deputy Director of Legislation and Communications, Department of Developmental Disabilities**

Zach Haughwout will serve as the department's point person with the legislature and manage constituent services and communications. Haughwout, a former aide to State Rep. Nancy Hollister, recently was responsible for reviewing agency administrative rule filings for the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR).

**Missy Craddock, Legislative Policy Director, Department of Mental Health**

Missy Craddock will manage legislative affairs for ODMH, which is taking the lead on OHT's initiative to integrate physical and behavioral health. Craddock covered health and human services issues for the House Republican Caucus under former Speakers Larry Householder and Jon Husted, and she recently served as the director of government relations for the Ohio Provider Resource Association.

**Jennifer Seidel, Legislation Liaison, Department of Aging**

Jennifer Seidel, a graduate of Ohio University, will represent ODA before the legislature. A former Ohio House staffer, Seidel has experience as a grassroots director for political nonprofit organizations and most recently worked as a project manager for Strategic Public Partners.

**Merissa McKinstry, Legislative Liaison, Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services**

Merissa McKinstry, who has seven years of state government experience and a bachelor's degree in political science from Ohio Dominican University, will be joining the department as its new legislative liaison on March 7. McKinstry was ODADAS's legislative liaison from 2004-2007 and recently served as the director of business development for Fox Run Center.