

## Expanding and Improving Presumptive Eligibility for Pregnant Women and Children

- The current eligibility-determination system for Medicaid coverage is complex and time-consuming for individuals in need of medical care. For example, case workers in Ohio must evaluate applicants against more than 150 separate categories to make eligibility determinations, and full eligibility determination can take as long as 45 days.
- Ohio Medicaid is pursuing an [initiative to simplify and streamline the eligibility process](#) for all Medicaid-eligible individuals. In the meantime, presumptive eligibility provides a short-term alternative for the most vulnerable Ohioans. Presumptive eligibility allows prospective Medicaid beneficiaries to receive immediate, time-limited (60-day) medical services, while a traditional full eligibility determination is being processed.
- In 2010, following a change to the Social Security Act, Ohio implemented a limited version of presumptive eligibility for Medicaid. Only children were eligible, and presumptive eligibility could only be administered at county job and family services offices, limiting the effectiveness for individuals with immediate medical needs.
- In the Governor's Jobs budget (HB 153), the Kasich Administration, legislators and advocates worked together to expand presumptive eligibility to pregnant women. The bill also permits certain qualified providers—federally qualified health centers (and look-alikes), children's hospitals and other appropriate entities—to perform a simplified check and grant immediate medical assistance to both children and pregnant women where they receive their health care.
- Qualified providers will now be able to access the Medicaid Information Technology System (MITS), and by verifying basic biographical information, residency and other pertinent data, an individual will be able to access services immediately rather than having to go first to a county office of job and family services. The system will generate a document an individual can take with them and use with any Medicaid provider. The qualified provider will also share the responsibility to assist the individual in completing their traditional Medicaid application.
- This new method will increase the efficiency of the eligibility-determination process and improve access and overall health outcomes for at-risk individuals. Research has shown that access to early prenatal care can lead to better birth outcomes and reduce the incidents of premature and low-birth-weight babies, which is better for the mother, child and Ohio taxpayers.
- Ohio will begin testing the enhanced presumptive eligibility program in June 2012 and will implement the program statewide by January 2013.
- Ohio is investing \$2.75 million on systems updates and training of community partners to implement the enhanced presumptive eligibility program. The sources of these funds are Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) performance bonuses that Ohio achieved for increasing enrollment and retention of eligible children in Medicaid.