



GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC.

17 SOUTH HIGH STREET - SUITE 245

COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-3413

PHONE: 614-461-9335

FAX: 614-461-9336

**Ohio Speech & Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition
Legislative Activities Report
April 2017**

Members of the Ohio House have almost finished their work on HB 49, the state's two-year operating budget. This bill sets the parameters for funding for every aspect of state government operations. The House Finance Committee and its subcommittees have heard hundreds of hours of testimony on the bill at this stage. They plan to accept a substitute version of the bill on April 25th and then vote the bill out of the House the week of May 1st.

As he has done in the past, Governor Kasich included numerous policy reforms in his biennial budget proposal. We fully expect the House to change many aspects of the proposal before voting the bill out in early May. Hearings have already started informally in the Senate and debate will continue there until mid-June. The bill must go to the Governor for his signature by June 30th as required by the Ohio Constitution.

HB 49 proposes to continue to cover Ohio's expanded Medicaid population, despite uncertainty about how Congress intends to replace the Affordable Care Act. However, Kasich's plan does direct the Department of Medicaid to seek federal approval to require certain adults, with incomes above the federal poverty rate, to pay a monthly premium of about \$20. This change will impact about 150,000 people on Medicaid. We fully expect both of these issues to stay in the bill as it leaves the House and moves to the Senate for hearings.

In addition to these Medicaid provisions, the budget bill also proposes to continue funding for the Ohio Hearing Aid Assistance Program, which provides coverage for children whose family commercial health insurance does not cover hearing aids. This program is funded at \$250,000/year in each year of the biennium and is administered by the Ohio Department of Health. Again, we do not foresee any changes to this program in the version of the bill that the House passes.

Finally, HB 49 as introduced proposed to consolidate the Ohio Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology with the Optometry, Optical Dispensers and Hearing Aid Dealers Boards. The new board would be called the Ohio Vision and Hearing Professionals Board. The membership of the new Board would be as follows: two optometrists, two dispensing opticians, two SLPs, one audiologist, one hearing aid dealer and one public member. This proposal, along with the other consolidation concepts in HB 49, have been widely opposed by members of the Ohio House. We understand that the House is inclined to remove the consolidation plans from HB 49 when it creates its substitute version. It plans to leave in the language related to anti-trust review by a state agency, but will likely change which agency has that review. Under the bill, the Department of Administrative Services has anti-trust review. Under the House version, we understand that that authority may be transferred to the Attorney General or the Common Sense Initiative Office.

Outside of the budget, GAC has submitted its collaborative proposal to address the shortages of related services providers in the schools to House members for consideration. As you may recall, GAC met for many months last year with our partners – other related services providers, ODE, the Department of Higher Education, the school administrators and the ESCs – to come up with a collaborative proposal that addresses education, recruitment, and retention barriers for all related services providers in the schools. It is our hope that the House will be inclined to support this proposal legislatively in the near future.

Outside of the Legislature, the Ohio Department of Medicaid has announced that billing for services in the schools where the provider is a SLP or audiologist who is registered as an ORP provider will be activated by April 1, 2017. You will recall that GAC, working with its partners, secured an amendment late last year that allows SLPs and AuDs to “order, refer and prescribe (ORP)” their own services for Medicaid students with IEPs. This eliminated the need for a physician prescription. School-based providers must log into the Ohio Medicaid provider enrollment system and register as ORP providers for their services to be appropriately billed by their districts going forward.

We have been tracking the following legislation during the 132nd General Assembly:

HB49 **OPERATING BUDGET (SMITH R)** Creates FY 2018-2019 main operating budget.

Current Status: 3/30/2017 - House Finance, (Eighth Hearing)

HB51 **DEPARTMENT REVIEW SCHEDULE (FABER K)** To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to

require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review.

Current Status: 2/28/2017 - House State and Local Government, (Third Hearing)

HB75 **PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE-ARMED FORCES** (GAVARONE T, MERRIN D) To establish an expedited process to grant a professional license to an individual who is on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States, or is the spouse of such an individual, and holds a valid license in another state.

Current Status: 3/15/2017 - House Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security, (Second Hearing)

HB85 **ENTER HEALTH CARE COMPACT** (RETFERFORD W) To enter into the Health Care Compact.

Current Status: 3/7/2017 - House Federalism and Interstate Relations, (First Hearing)

HB98 **CAREER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS** (DUFFEY M, BOGGS K) Regarding the presentation of career information to students.

Current Status: 3/28/2017 - House Education and Career Readiness, (Second Hearing)

HB115 **DATABASE-PERSONS WITH COMMUNICATION DISABILITY** (GAVARONE T, WIGGAM S) To establish a database of persons who voluntarily register as being diagnosed with a communication disability or who voluntarily register a minor child or ward as the parents or guardians of such persons for purposes of law enforcement notification.

Current Status: 3/29/2017 - House Community and Family Advancement, (Second Hearing)

HB131 **PHYSICAL THERAPY LAWS** (GAVARONE T, REINEKE W) To modify the laws governing the practice of physical therapy.

Current Status: 3/29/2017 - Referred to Committee House Health

HB150 **LICENSE PLATE CREATION** (PATMON B) To create a special license plate for hearing-impaired individuals.

Current Status: 3/29/2017 - Referred to Committee House Transportation and Public Safety

- HCR5** **SUPPORT AFFORDABLE CARE ACT** (SYKES E) To urge the Congress of the United States, and in particular the Ohio Congressional delegation, to support the preservation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.
Current Status: 2/28/2017 - Referred to Committee House Insurance
- HCR6** **REPEAL AFFORDABLE CARE ACT** (GOODMAN W, FABER K) To urge congress to continue its efforts to fully repeal the affordable care act and to recommend that future federal health care policies restore power to the states, fund the Medicaid program through block grants to individual states, and permit the sale of health insurance across state lines.
Current Status: 3/7/2017 - Referred to Committee House Government Accountability and Oversight
- SB3** **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** (BEAGLE B, BALDERSON T) To revise the laws governing the state's workforce development system, programs that may be offered by primary and secondary schools, certificates of qualification for employment, and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency, and to designate the first week of May as In-Demand Jobs Week.
Current Status: 3/14/2017 - **BILL AMENDED**, Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce, (Second Hearing)
- SB27** **DEAF HISTORY MONTH DESIGNATION** (BEAGLE B) To designate the period beginning March 13 and ending April 15 as "Ohio Deaf History Month."
Current Status: 3/28/2017 - House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing)
- SB48** **HEARING IMPAIRED-DRIVING** (WILLIAMS S) To create a special license plate for hearing-impaired individuals and to require the registrar to include an identifying symbol on a driver's license, commercial driver's license, or state-issued identification card of a hearing-impaired individual, if requested.
Current Status: 3/7/2017 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing)
- SB59** **BICYCLE USE-HELMETS** (SKINDELL M) To require bicycle operators and passengers under 18 years of age to wear protective helmets when the bicycle is operated on a roadway and to establish the Bicycle Safety Fund to be used by the Department of Public Safety to assist low-income families in the purchase of bicycle helmets.
Current Status: 3/28/2017 - Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs, (First Hearing)

- SB79** **STATE DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW SCHEDULE** (JORDAN K) To require standing committees of the General Assembly to establish a schedule for the periodic review and sunset of state departments that are currently in the Governor's cabinet, and to require that Auditor of State performance audits be scheduled to coincide with the periodic review.
Current Status: 3/29/2017 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform,
(Second Hearing)
- SB91** **OHIO HEALTH CARE PLAN** (SKINDELL M, TAVARES C) To establish and operate the Ohio Health Care Plan to provide universal health care coverage to all Ohio residents.
Current Status: 3/28/2017 - Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions,
(First Hearing)
- SB93** **HEALTH INSURANCE-HEARING AIDS** (BROWN E) To require health insurers to offer coverage for hearing aids.
Current Status: 3/28/2017 - Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions,
(First Hearing)
- SB99** **MEDICAID EXPANSION-NEW ENROLLMENT** (COLEY W) To prohibit the Medicaid program from newly enrolling individuals as part of the expansion eligibility group.
Current Status: 3/21/2017 - Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid,
(First Hearing)
- SB110** **HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS-IDENTIFICATION** (TAVARES C) To require a health care professional to wear identification when providing care or treatment in the presence of a patient.
Current Status: 3/21/2017 - Introduced