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

The 132nd General Assembly has been extremely active since first convening in January. Since that time lawmakers have introduced hundreds of bills and each chamber has passed numerous pieces of legislation. Legislators have also been busy working on the most substantial bill they will face all session, the state's two-year operating budget (HB 49). This massive piece of legislation, touches nearly every facet of state government and ensures that many vital programs are adequately funded over the next two years.

Since its introduction in February, HB 49 has heavily dictated the legislative agenda in the House of Representatives, as lawmakers have been busy diving into the over 3,500-page budget bill. As he has done in the past, Governor Kasich included numerous policy reforms in his biennial budget proposal. Lawmakers will continue to debate HB 49 until the end of June, when the measure must be passed by both chambers and signed into law by the governor.

Kasich's budget continues 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.

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.

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. GAC has been working with other interested parties and has submitted letters and testimony in opposition to the consolidation plan. Recently, however, the Governor's office reached out with an alternative plan that would merge the OBSLPA with the Hearing Aid Dealers Board. GAC has indicated that it remains solidly opposed to any consolidation.

Outside of the budget, GAC has recently 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.

In other news, the Kasich Administration announced that Director Rick Hodges is leaving his role as director of the Department of Health. Lance Himes, the department's chief legal counsel, will serve as acting director. Mr. Hodges has served as the director of ODH since 2014 and previously led the Ohio Turnpike Commission. Governor Kasich's office said he is leaving to pursue "new opportunities outside of the administration."

Governor Kasich made headlines recently when he announced plans to deliver his State of the State address in Sandusky, Ohio. His speech, which will be delivered on April 4th, marks the sixth time in a row Kasich has staged the speech outside Columbus. After delivering the 2011 address in the traditional location — the House chambers at the Statehouse — the governor has moved the speech to Steubenville, Lima, Medina, Wilmington and Marietta.

The House Democratic Caucus is looking to replace Rep. Greta Johnson (D-Akron). Rep. Johnson announced that she is resigning her seat to accept a new position in the office of

Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro, where she will serve as deputy director in the Department of Law.

Also of note, the field of candidates to replace Governor Kasich continues to grow. On the Republican side, Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci have both announced their candidacies for governor. Taylor and Renacci will likely be joined by other Republican hopefuls, including Attorney General Mike DeWine and Secretary of State Jon Husted. On the Democratic side, Senate Minority Leader Joe Schiavoni has announced his candidacy for governor as have former State Rep. Connie Pillich and former U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton. Former Democratic Attorney General Richard Cordray is also rumored to be interested in entering the race.

Candidates for other statewide offices have also been announced. Earlier this year Auditor Dave Yost made public his plans to run for state attorney general in 2018. Former Ohio Senate President Keith Faber announced that he hopes to replace Mr. Yost as state auditor in 2018. State Representative Dorothy Pelanda recently announced her campaign to be Ohio's next secretary of state. Robert Sprague, currently the representative from the 83rd House District, also kicked off his campaign for state treasurer. Steven Dettelbach, the former federal prosecutor and U.S. attorney in Cleveland, has expressed interest in the Democratic nomination for attorney general.

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