

Budget Spotlight - More Choices for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

Governor John Kasich's budget proposals continue to transform Ohio into a national leader in health care. Included in the historic 2016-2017 biennial budget proposed February 2, Blueprint for A New Ohio, are many areas affecting DODD and the statewide developmental disabilities community, including a historic investment in Ohio's DD service system.



Among them are:

- Raising the Medicaid Asset Limit: The recommendation is that the asset limit for Medicaid recipients be raised to \$2,000 from the current \$1,500. Many self advocates have requested this increase as a common sense approach to allowing them improved economic security without penalizing them for earning money.
- Focusing on self-directed services: Service providers will be able to continue providing Medicaid-funded HCBS waiver services if they seek employment through a home health agency, or if they provide services to a person who is using a self-directed option where the recipient is the employer of record. This includes services provided under the Self Empowered Life Funding (SELF) waiver now, and self-directed services will be added to the Individual Options (IO) and Level One waivers in the future. Read more about these changes in this [white paper from OHT](#).

To improve oversight, decrease fraud and abuse, and improve health outcomes for people, a majority of states -- along with the federal Medicare program -- allow Medicaid-funded services provided only through home health care agencies, not independent providers. Under the proposed budget, the Ohio Department of Medicaid would not take any new independent providers after July 1, 2016 -- and by July 1, 2019, only accept claims submitted through home health agencies unless they are providing services under a self-directed waiver.

DODD Director John Martin observed that the 2016-2017 budget proposal considers the needs of all Ohioans, and provides funding for initiatives designed to help people of all abilities to live, work, and learn in their communities. In state dollars, the DODD portion of the budget is increased by \$45 million in year one, and by \$102 million in year two, over FY2015 levels.

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Learn more about the budget at these links: [Our Future](#); [Policy Detail](#); [Fact Sheet](#); Governor's website.

Governor Kasich's Blueprint for a New Ohio proposes historic new investments to ensure that every Ohioan with a developmental disability who wants to live and work in the community can do so.

The Executive Budget will invest \$316 million over two years to increase home and community based services (HCBS), create new options for individuals who want to leave institutions, and support community-based employment for anyone who wants to work.

- Office of Health Transformation



The Warren County Kroger Store was named an Employer of the Year during the Governor's Office on People with Disabilities annual recognition event, Kroger stores around the state have embraced and welcomed community-based employment and training programs for people with developmental disabilities,

Budget Spotlight - More Choices! The scale of change is transformational ...

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He noted, “Funding for Home and Community-Based Services (waivers) goes from \$184 million (FY2015) to \$279 million (FY2017) in support of those receiving and waiting for waivers. That’s an increase of \$95 million in this area, to move forward statewide efforts to offer more choices for Ohioans with developmental disabilities -- including downsizing institutional settings, and building into the system more opportunities for community inclusion at home and at work.” He added,

“It is a historic demonstration of support, and makes a down-payment on the recommendations made by the Strategic Planning Leadership Group.”

How the Money Will Be Used – Additional Waiver Services
Additional waivers will increase support to people on the waiting list, or who choose to leave Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs):

- Adding approximately 2,000 new IO waivers and 1,000 Self Empowered Life Funding (SELF) waivers to assist people on the waiting list, and those who leave an ICF.
- Adding 2,890 more IO waivers by converting the Transitions DD (TDD) waivers, thereby providing enhanced payments and day services, reducing the types of waivers from four to three, and simplifying the system.

How the Money Will Be Used – Strengthening Waiver Services
The budget continues to prioritize funding to reflect the growing demand for HCBS and will allow DODD to:

- Add nursing services to the IO waiver to serve people with medical needs who live in community settings.
- Increase waiver rates by 6 percent to provide for increased wages for direct care staff.
- Strengthen oversight and quality assurance efforts so the person-centered plan is delivering meaningful outcomes.
- Develop a daily rate to decrease administrative complexity.

How the Money Will Be Used – Employment and Day Services
The budget includes nearly \$3 million for each of the two years and will create new service models that promote community employment and integrated day services. Individuals will transition from workshops and other facility-based day settings to community-based alternatives, over an extended timeframe.

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not incremental.



Shared Living affords people opportunities to live in a family home setting and experience the daily rhythms of life in the community.

Susan Neva (seated, right) lives in a family home in Mahoning County complete with caregivers, friends, dogs, and family members who visit often. Susan’s mother (seated, left) says that Ohio Shared Living services are the right choice for their family.

How the Money Will Be Used – System Infrastructure Improvements
Director Martin noted that statewide system infrastructure improvements have been built into the budget plans so that a foundation of excellence in service can be encouraged and supported. He stated, “We will have approximately \$8 million per year to provide training to the statewide DD services workforce to better equip them to provide community services, while
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Additional funds for community employment will be used for support of DODD’s partnership with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) to assist in the cost of transitioning to integrated day services and supported employment, and to inform individuals and families regarding the options available to them.

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How the Money Will Be Used – System Infrastructure Improvements covering some costs associated with system transformation efforts. Some rental assistance will be provided to support community living, strengthen employment and day service integration, and help providers transition from ICFs to waiver services.”

How the Money Will Be Used – ICF Program

Continuing the community-based services direction in the previous two budgets, DODD will continue the modernization of the ICF program, in line with the vision outlined in the ICF white paper three years ago. It includes plans for smaller facilities, conversions to waivers, and a focus on services to people with the most intense needs.

DODD will honor the choice of individuals who want to stay in ICFs, while supporting the choice of those who want to leave.

Some of the initiatives to help accomplish this include:

- Removing the grandfather clause that permits more than two people in a bedroom. A downsizing plan will be required that brings the provider into compliance within ten years. Admission will be restricted if facilities do not meet the two-persons-per-bedroom standard.
- Including a modest increase in funds to accommodate downsizing. When coupled with a flat rate for people in acuity assessment categories five and six, it provides more funds for people with high acuity.
- Contracting to redesign the ICF reimbursement system to reward quality.
- Requesting a recommendation from a County Board of DD prior to a person entering a large ICF. The County Board and DODD must determine that admission to the large ICF is the least restrictive environment for that person, while leaving the final decision to that person.
- Deeming persons in ICFs a priority on the waiver waiting list. They would receive options counseling, and be contacted by someone not affiliated with the ICF to determine their interest in community options.
- Allow funding to follow a person who chooses to leave a large ICF.

The budget introduced in February now is in the discussion process in the Ohio Legislature, and state legislators will review the full budget during the next few months. This is a thorough process which culminates in the adoption of an agreed-upon version of the budget bill by June 30. DODD respects the process and understands there may be revisions and various changes before the final bill is enacted.

DODD appreciates the Kasich Administration’s additional investments in community-based services, supporting the trend away from large, institutional settings, and workshop-based employment, and reflecting recommendations developed by the Strategic Planning Leadership Group. We understand that the budget is a complex construct with many moving parts. DODD actively will engage the statewide developmental disabilities community in reviewing and exploring the options available to the system. We look forward to working with our partners to continue the modernization process.



“ The ache for home lives in all of us ... the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned. ”



-Maya Angelou