



**Friday, May 19, 2017**

## **Effect Of Medicaid Expansion On Homeless Reviewed; Kasich Talks Health Care In Cleveland...**

A report by the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio found that Medicaid expansion increased the percentage of single adults accessing homeless services who were covered by the program.

The increased coverage coincided with a decrease in the rate of homelessness from 2011 to 2016, according to COHHIO.

In 2013, the **report** said, 36% of single adults who accessed homeless services were covered by Medicaid, while that percentage rose to more than 80% in 2016.

"Most people who spent years living on the streets and homeless shelters were not actually eligible for Medicaid until the state eliminated eligibility restrictions for single, childless adults," COHHIO Executive Director Bill Faith said in a statement. "Expanding Ohio's Medicaid program to a population with high rates mental health and substance abuse issues was essential for helping people to escape long-term homelessness."

The report also found that the total number of homeless households fell by more than 20% from 2011 to 2016, veteran homelessness fell by 27% and chronic homelessness fell by 61%, using data from the annual point in time count.

Mr. Faith opposed work requirements and premiums in the Medicaid program, saying they would provide hurdles to care and would shift costs to other public systems.

"Without access to Medicaid coverage for vulnerable Ohioans, there will be more untreated mental illness and substance abuse in our communities, more people in local homeless shelters, hospital emergency rooms, child welfare agencies, courts and jails," he said. "We call on state and federal leaders to protect Medicaid expansion so that Ohio can keep winning the fight against homelessness."

**Kasich Talks Health Care: Gov. John Kasich** weighed in on the federal health care debate at a forum in Cleveland Friday alongside Cleveland Clinic CEO Toby Cosgrove. The event was **streamed online**.

The governor discussed his view of what needs to be done to lower the cost of health care and improve quality, including giving states more flexibility in negotiating with pharmaceutical companies.

"All these things are doable. They're vexing. You can't take a pill and achieve it. You can't make an app and achieve it. It won't fit on a bumper sticker," he said. "Doing what we're doing now is just letting this problem get worse and worse."

Gov. Kasich talked about the letter he and three other governors signed with a proposal to change the health care system, and said it's difficult to get buy-in from politicians who fear deviating from the message backed by the president.

Regarding pharmaceuticals, the governor suggested that states have the ability to drop the coverage of certain drugs from their Medicaid formularies. Being able to do so, he said, would give states more leverage in negotiating drug prices, even if the states don't actually drop them.

"The minute we can drop it is the minute we can start to negotiate," he said.

**Medical Marijuana:** The state's Medical Marijuana Control Program has posted a **request for proposals** for a consultant to deal with dispensary applications.

The program also posted **answers** to questions from applicants for cultivator licenses.

**Children's Hospitals On AHCA:** Nick Lashutka, president and CEO of the Ohio Children's Hospital Association, said in a statement that the health care plan passed by the U.S. House would include large cuts for Medicaid affecting children.

"Ohio children already on Medicaid were not the beneficiaries of Obamacare (the Affordable Care Act) and they should not be the victims of its repeal, repair or revision," he said in a statement. "Kids should not pay the price for overspending elsewhere in the Medicaid program, but they will if protections are not put in place to ensure predictable, stable and adequate funding for their care."

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