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Week in Review

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As a service to the clients and friends of Governmental Policy Group, Inc. and RH Resources we would like to extend the following weekly update of events happening around Capitol Square.

ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Three Ohio nonprofit organizations were among 17 groups across the country that received grants from the Cardinal Health Foundation to help fight prescription drug misuse by improving their communities' medication disposal programs. Those Ohio grantees are the following: Community Awareness and Prevention Association (CAPA), Brecksville/Broadview Heights; Licking County Prevention Partnership (Pathways of Central Ohio), Newark; and Union County Drug Free Coalition, Marysville.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

The committee formed by the Ohio attorney general and legislative leaders to address drug prevention education heard recommendations last week for the creation of official K-12 health standards that would ensure substance abuse prevention is taught in the earliest years of a child's schooling.

FY18-19 BUDGET

Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Director John McCarthy updated the Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC) on the status of the department's proposed FY18-19 budget. The budget has been submitted to the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), and they are currently in negotiations over the proposals although one element for the proposed budget was just approved by the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC). That group adopted a growth cap for per-member, per-month Medicaid spending for the next biennium of 3.3 percent.

CHILDREN/YOUTH

State officials are encouraging parents to talk to teen drivers about safe driving practices, including the dangers of texting while driving. Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor and Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) Director John Born said all parents should discuss the driving safety issues with young drivers during National Teen Driving Safety Week, which runs through Saturday, Oct. 22.

EDUCATION

State Superintendent of Education Paolo DeMaria together with the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) budget chief Aaron Rausch walked the State Board of Education through the proposed FY18-19 state budget recommendations at the meeting last Monday. Items on the department's wish list include more funding for early childhood education, transportation and a reconstituted Straight A Fund.

The State Board of Education's Standards and Graduation Requirements Committee started discussions last Tuesday on a draft rule to implement Ohio's recent expansion of high school equivalency options beyond the GED. Ohio students will soon get at least one alternative to the GED under HB 113 (Grossman-Manning), a CPR instruction measure that became an education policy omnibus and passed just before the General Assembly's summer break.

The Controlling Board unanimously approved \$500,000 for the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to continue to defend itself against a lawsuit from the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT), though one member told ODE that the agency is going around the Legislature in its pursuit of log-in records of online charter schools.

ENERGY

Ohio falls roughly mid-pack in new national rankings for most and least energy-efficient states, though it fares much better -- even breaking the top category -- when energy prices are factored in. The Buckeye State rises to 12th, one spot ahead of Delaware, when energy costs and energy savings are combined.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) visited Columbus last week to tout a bill he said will help lower the cost of prescription drugs and save money in the long-run by reducing the period during which pharmaceutical companies can have exclusive rights to a drug. The Price Relief, Innovation and

Competition for Essential Drugs (PRICED) Act targets biologics, a class of medications that use natural ingredients and living molecules to treat ailments from cancers to auto immune disorders.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger's (R-Clarksville) office said he's changing the post-election session schedule for the remainder of 2016, adding sessions, giving firm dates to previously if-needed sessions and designating other previously scheduled sessions as tentative.

Reps. John Patterson (D-Jefferson) and Michael Sheehy (D-Oregon) are seeking to establish the Ohio Water Quality Improvement Program. Under the legislation, expected to be officially introduced by the end of the month, farmers would be incentivized to conserve environmentally sensitive agricultural land rather than use it for farming or ranching, according to the lawmakers.

GOVERNOR

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Blake T. Arthur of Zanesville (Muskingum County) reappointed to the Oil and Gas Commission for a term beginning Oct. 17, 2016, and ending Oct. 14, 2021.
- Teleange T.R. Thomas of Lakewood (Cuyahoga County) to the Maternity and Newborn Advisory Council for a term beginning Oct. 20, 2016, and ending Oct. 30, 2018.
- Angela P. Mastros of Wintersville (Jefferson County) reappointed to the Eastern Gateway Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Oct. 20, 2016, and ending Oct. 16, 2021.
- Karl H. Schneider of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) and Porter R. Welch of Galena (Delaware County) reappointed to the Board of Building Appeals for terms beginning Oct. 20, 2016, and ending Oct. 13, 2020.

MARIJUANA

Doctors are not prohibited from recommending medical marijuana to patients before rules are written for the program created in HB 523 (Huffman), the State Medical Board of Ohio (SMBO) clarified at its meeting this week. Last month, the board issued guidance saying a physician could not issue a "state of Ohio approved written recommendation" to use medical marijuana until the doctor received a certificate from the state.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary of State Jon Husted addressed questions about early voting and voting fraud in a Twitter town hall held last Wednesday. Husted told one questioner that Ohio has one "of the most generous voting schedules in the nation," noting Ohioans have 650 hours to vote-by-mail, 200 in-person, and 13 on Election Day.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

While not directly endorsing the idea, a representative of the Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA) told the Unemployment Compensation Reform Joint Committee last week that it should

consider bonding as an option to pay off future federal loans for trust fund debt, as well as exempting unemployment compensation benefits from state income tax.

Legislative Activity:

No legislative activity to report at this time as legislators are on summer recess.