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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

The state would dedicate 10 percent of its Rainy Day Fund to strengthen local governments and provide treatment infrastructure for groups working against the statewide opioid epidemic under new legislation announced Wednesday by Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman).

AGING

A significant number of the state's nursing homes are performing poorly on quality measures, according to a new report from Miami University and data from the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM). The report from Miami's Scripps Gerontology Center (SGC) says Ohio ranks below the national average on all 10 quality indicators measured by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Minimum Data Set (MDS). This is despite the fact that the ODM pays nursing facilities an amount that is in line with the national average, the Governor's Office of Health Transformation said in a document accompanying the data set from the state.

However, nursing home representative Peter Van Runkle said the study relied on "old data" and that figures for 2017 show a "different picture."

The House Aging and Long-Term Care Committee used its meeting Wednesday to hear presentations from groups with its same focus -- the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (O4A), Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice (OCHC) and LeadingAge Ohio.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General (AG) Mike DeWine announced that Ohio and several other states have reached an agreement in principle to join the federal government in a settlement with CareCore National LLC, a benefits management company, to resolve allegations that it improperly authorized medical procedures paid for with Medicare and Medicaid funds. The settlement includes \$446,878.80 in restitution and other recoveries for Ohio's Medicaid program.

A recently-launched program helping Southern Ohio drug addicts and their children -- the Ohio Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma (START) program -- should be funded statewide if it proves to be effective, Attorney General Mike DeWine said Monday at the Two Days in May Conference on Victim Assistance. "We would hope the state Legislature will take a look at this program, see that it does in fact work, and in the future, fund a program like this in every county in the state of Ohio," DeWine said. While he has not officially announced his candidacy, DeWine is expected to seek the Republican nomination for governor in 2018.

BALLOT ISSUES

The campaign team supporting the Ohio Drug Price Relief Act was announced Tuesday and will include a former Ohio Republican Party chairman and one of the top Republican media consultants in the country. Calling itself a "bipartisan political dream team," Ohio Taxpayers for Lower Drug Prices will support the Ohio Drug Price Relief Act, an initiated statute which would restrict what the state pays for pharmaceuticals to what the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs pays for the same drugs.

FY18-19 BUDGET

Approximately 70 witnesses queued up Wednesday in five-minute time slots to present their issues and concerns on a wide variety of human service provisions in the House-passed FY18-19 proposed budget to the Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee. Topics ran the gamut from programs addressing the opioid crisis, behavior health redesign, Medicaid and the House constraints on spending in the next biennium, the medically handicapped program, tobacco cessation, early childhood education and others.

EDUCATION

Rep. David Leland (D-Columbus) introduced HB 220 to subject charter school funding to full state audits even when transferred to private management companies. According Leland's office, the bill would specify state funding remains designated as public funds even when transferred to a third-party management company that runs daily operations. That would subject the money to legal restrictions for permissible use as well as auditing by the state auditor.

Several witnesses representing schools, teachers and technology companies Tuesday urged the House Education Committee to act on a proposal to create statewide computer science standards in Ohio. The proposal in HB 170, sponsored by Reps. Mike Duffey (R-Worthington) and Rick Carfagna (R-Westerville), would direct the State Board of Education to write the standards and allow for computer science courses to be used to fulfill course requirements for science and math, among other provisions.

ELECTIONS 2018

Rep. Kathleen Clyde (D-Kent) became the first Democrat in the 2018 secretary of state's race Tuesday, saying Ohio can and must encourage participation in elections and strengthen democracy.

U.S. Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-Columbus) said Tuesday that he won't run for U.S. Senate in 2018, giving Treasurer Josh Mandel a clearer path to have a rematch against U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), who defeated him in 2012.

Less than 24 hours after Kathleen Clyde joined the 2018 secretary of state's race, Sen. Frank LaRose (R-Copley) officially threw his hat into the ring, setting up a primary on the Republican side against Rep. Dorothy Pelanda (Marysville).

ENERGY

Rover Pipeline LLC has failed to pay Ohio History Connection (OHC) the \$1.5 million it agreed to provide under a memorandum of agreement (MOA) finalized earlier this year, according to a letter from OHC to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to offset the demolition of the Stoneman House in Carroll County and planned adverse effects to another historically significant property in Crawford County.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) will hold two public hearings on Friday, June 16, to accept public comments on the draft 2018 Program Management Plan for the Drinking Water Assistance Fund (DWAF). The fund provides financial and technical assistance for a variety of projects that help improve or protect the quality of Ohio's drinking water.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) and the Capitol Square Foundation (CSF) will unveil the portraits of seven former speakers of the Ohio House of Representatives on Tuesday, May 23 at 11 a.m. in the Rotunda of the Ohio Statehouse.

GOVERNOR

Ohio leaders paid tribute to the son of two Auschwitz survivors and a soldier who witnessed the liberation of Dachau during Wednesday's observance of the 37th annual Governor's Holocaust Commemoration, held before the Statehouse Holocaust Memorial.

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Peggy Griffith of Deerfield (Portage County), Chauncey A. Cochran of New Albany (Franklin County), and David W. Johnson of Summitville (Columbiana County) reappointed to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation Board of Directors for terms beginning June 12, 2017, and ending June 11, 2020.
- Peter M. McLinden of Lebanon (Warren County) to the Bureau of Workers' Compensation Board of Directors for a term beginning May 12, 2017, and ending June 11, 2018.
- Donald L. Plotts of Mount Gilead (Morrow County) reappointed to the Marion Technical College Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 12, 2017, and ending April 29, 2020.
- Jean M. Jakovlic of Granville (Licking County) to the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council for a term beginning May 12, 2017, and ending Dec. 31, 2019.
- Edward D. Good of Shadyside (Belmont County) reappointed to the Unemployment Compensation Review Commission for a term beginning May 15, 2017, and ending Feb. 26, 2023.
- John W. Zeiger of Columbus (Franklin County) to the Ohio State University Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 15, 2017, and ending May 13, 2026.
- Edward D. Eberhart of Barnesville (Belmont County) reappointed to the Belmont College Board of Trustees for a term beginning May 16, 2017, and ending May 12, 2020.
- Deborah Givens Crockett of Columbus (Franklin County), Pastor Mark D. Ford of Akron (Summit County), and Rabbi Avraham Louis Goldstein of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the Advisory Board of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives for terms beginning May 16, 2017, and ending May 4, 2018.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Medicaid managed care plans presented to legislators Thursday on their pay-for-performance efforts and the challenges of data sharing among insurers, providers, hospitals and others in the health care system. Officials for Buckeye Community Health Plan and CareSource also fielded questions from the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC) on how to get people thinking about their health at a younger age and what they're doing to break down racial and ethnic health disparities, among other topics.

The state would license a new type of dental care provider, known as "dental therapists," under a bill introduced by Sens. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) and Cecil Thomas (D-Cincinnati). SB 98 would establish the licensure of dental therapists, who would work under the supervision of a dentist, similar to a physician's assistant, but would have an increased focus on educating patients about preventive care and conducting simple procedures such as fluoride treatments, fillings and non-surgical extractions.

MARIJUANA

The Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) is looking for a contractor to help the board develop and score its applications for medical marijuana dispensaries.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted announced Monday that 9,569 new entities filed to do business in Ohio during April 2017, an increase of 263 when compared to the same month in 2016.

UTILITIES

Opponents, proponents and interested parties descended on the House Public Utilities Committee Tuesday to provide their perspectives on HB178 (DeVitis), the so-called "ZEN bill" - zero emissions nuclear resource program.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

On Wednesday, the House sent workers' compensation budget HB 27 (Brinkman) to the Senate after Democrats failed to get provisions dealing with undocumented workers and a decrease to the statute of limitations on filing claims taken out.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

HOUSE:

PASSED BY HOUSE

- HB27** WORKERS' COMPENSATION BUDGET (Rep. Tom Brinkman) To make changes to the Workers' Compensation Law, to make appropriations for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation for the biennium beginning July 1, 2017, and ending June 30, 2019, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of the Bureau's programs.
Vote 66-31
- HB38** CRIMINAL OFFENSES-VIOLENCE (Rep. Dave Greenspan) To provide that purposely causing the death of a first responder or military member is aggravated murder and to require an offender to serve the prison term imposed for felonious assault on a peace officer, investigator, first responder, or military member consecutively to the prison term imposed for any related offense.
Vote 96-0
- HB115** DATABASE-PERSONS WITH COMMUNICATION DISABILITY (Rep. Theresa Gavarone, Rep. Scott Wiggam) 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.
Vote 96-0
- HB124** VOCATIONAL SCHOOL TAX LEVY (Rep. Andrew Brenner, Rep. Rick Carfagna) To authorize a joint vocational school district to submit the question of a renewal tax levy to voters who did not have an opportunity to vote on the levy at an election held in November of 2015 because the levy was only placed on the ballot in one of several counties in which the district has territory.
Vote 95-2, Emergency Clause 95-2
- SB24** CONSUMER INSTALLMENT LOANS (Sen. Louis Terhar) To create the Ohio Consumer Installment Loan Act.
Vote 93-0

SENATE:

PASSED BY SENATE

SB4 RECORDS EXPUNGEMENT (Sen. Stephanie Kunze, Sen. Scott Oelslager) To allow a person who is found not guilty of an offense or who is the defendant named in a dismissed criminal charge to apply for a court order to expunge the person's official records in the case if the charge or not guilty finding was the result of the applicant having been a human trafficking victim, to allow a person convicted of certain prostitution-related offenses to apply for the expungement of the conviction record of any offense, other than a specified disqualifying offense, the person's participation in which was a result of having been a human trafficking victim, and to allow intervention in lieu of conviction for persons charged with committing an offense while a victim of compelling prostitution.

Vote 33-0

SB8 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY (Sen. Randy Gardner, Sen. Louis Terhar) To require the Ohio School Facilities Commission to establish a program assisting school districts in purchasing technology and making physical alterations to improve technology infrastructure and school safety and security.

Vote 33-0