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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

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) told a crowd Monday at the 2019 Recovery Conference that he can go back to Washington D.C. and give examples from Ohio that show federal funding for recovery programs is working. He spoke at the event hosted by the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA).

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost Wednesday redoubled his opposition to Cuyahoga and Summit counties' case against the opioid industry proceeding in federal court, saying states' attorneys general are the appropriate vehicle to sue pharmaceutical companies on behalf of all constituents. He said the "piranha effect of hundreds of lawyers piling on" to thousands of local complaints will leech dollars from later settlements and ensure more opioid profits enrich attorneys rather than treat the drug addicted.

Ohio will receive \$6.3 million from medical and pharmaceutical company Johnson & Johnson as part of a nearly \$117 million multi-state settlement over deceptive marketing practices, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced Thursday. The company will pay the settlement to 41 states and Washington, D.C. after an investigation found Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiary Ethicon Inc. misrepresented the safety and effectiveness of a transvaginal surgical mesh and omitted details about the product.

BALLOT ISSUES

The ballot campaign to overturn energy subsidies in HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) filed signed affidavits with the U.S. District Court accusing Ohioans for Energy Security's competing campaign of "bribing" circulators with \$2,500 payments and free plane tickets to abandon signature gathering, costing Ohioans Against Corporate Bailouts more than 50 petition workers to date. Calling it "organized criminal activity," the anti-HB6 campaign told a federal judge Friday that state law diverts significant time and money from signature gathering and "chilled" petition circulators' First Amendment rights in favor of anti-circulators retained by FirstEnergy Solutions (FES). The Ohio Secretary of State's Office countered that petitioners have over-complied with reporting requirements in R.C. 3501.381 "at their own peril," and that state efforts to prevent election fraud justify a "slight burden on core political speech." An attorney for Ohioans Against Corporate Bailouts, Curt Hartman of Cincinnati, and counsel for the secretary of state, Assistant Attorney General Bridget Coontz, argued the case before district Judge Edmund Sargus in Columbus.

Then on Monday, Judge Sargus, citing free speech protections and reported "harassment and violence" against petition workers, awarded paid circulators with the anti-HB6 (Callender-Wilkin) ballot campaign a 14-day reprieve from state law requiring those "organizing any effort to obtain signatures" to register with the Ohio Secretary of State's Office.

On Wednesday, Ohioans Against Corporate Bailouts lodged a further challenge to the petition summary requirement in federal court, saying it consumed 40 of the 90 days it had following passage of HB6 to file 266,000 signatures with the state. The anti-HB6 group, citing a previous U.S. Supreme Court finding that,

"The loss of First Amendment freedoms, for even minimal periods of time, unquestionably constitutes irreparable injury," went on to say petition summary requirements in R.C. 3519.01 have "unconstitutionally burdened and infringed upon the full and robust exercise of the First Amendment rights" by restricting "core political speech" during an undetermined portion of the 90 days allotted opponents of a particular piece of legislation to secure enough signatures to qualify for the ballot.

BUSINESS/CORPORATE

The Ohio Business Roundtable announced Thursday that American Electric Power (AEP) President and CEO Nick Akins had been unanimously elected the organization's 14th chairman starting in January 2020. The current chairman is McKinsey & Company Senior Partner John Warner, whose term ends Dec. 31.

CHILDREN/FAMILIES

Policymakers invited child development experts, professionals and parents to the Statehouse Atrium Friday for an Early Childhood Policy Forum seeking input on areas of need in the sphere of

publicly-funded child care and early childhood education. Organized by members of the Legislative Children's Caucus and attended by Reps. Allison Russo (D-Columbus) and Mary Lightbody (D-Westerville), the forum featured speakers as well as policy panels that allowed interested parties to engage with legislative staff in roundtable discussions. Russo told *Hannah News* she hopes to develop legislation incorporating evidence-based strategies and best practices drawn from the day's conversations.

The Center for Community Solutions (CCS) recently released new fact sheets highlighting the health, economic, civic and educational status of women in Ohio. The fact sheets give information on the status women (often in comparison to men) for all 88 counties in Ohio. Statistics for each county can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yyww72tu>.

CIVIL RIGHTS

Despite similar bills' receiving little action in past General Assemblies, the bipartisan House cosponsors of the "Ohio Fairness Act" said the LGBTQ protections bill is ripe for passage this year, given the makeup of the Legislature and newfound support from businesses. Reps. Michael Skindell (D-Lakewood) and Brett Hillyer (R-Uhrichsville) said their HB369 would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected groups under Ohio's current anti-discrimination law, which prohibits discrimination based on race, sex and disability.

EDUCATION

The State Board of Education approved a proposal to expand the number of hours and types of activities future board members could be paid for at their current pay rate. Specifically, all board members could be paid for up to 144 hours of time spent on meeting preparation and constituent services. In addition, board leaders will be able to receive additional compensation, from 36 additional hours for a committee vice chair to 144 additional hours for the board president.

State Superintendent Paolo DeMaria will receive a significant pay increase under a resolution approved Monday by the State Board of Education's Executive Committee, but he will no longer be eligible for a bonus, which members said could not be appropriately awarded with an undefined process. The resolution includes a 2.75 percent raise, consistent with other state employee raises, as well as an "equitable pay adjustment" of \$15,215.19 to retroactively make up for market adjustments in the superintendent's base salary. However, a possible \$20,000 bonus will no longer be available. Should the full board approve the resolution at its November meeting, the superintendent's salary will be \$210,000 per year.

The Senate will not pass a bill that would abolish controversial Academic Distress Commissions (ADCs) without an adequate system to replace them, Senate Education Committee Chair Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) told members of the State Board of Education Monday. Lehner weighed in on the status of HB154 (Miller-Jones) as it works its way through her committee. The House version of the bill would have dissolved ADCs in favor of a local-control approach. That plan was largely curtailed by changes made in the Senate committee in September.

The Ohio Department of Education said Tuesday the state won \$43 million from two competitive federal grants meant to support student literacy programs. Most of the award came from the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant, which will provide \$42 million over five years to establish model literacy sites in preschools and elementary, middle and high schools. The Model

Demonstration Projects for Early Identification of Students with Dyslexia Grant, which is providing \$1.2 million, will support pilot programs in three model schools serving students in preschool through first grade.

The school funding plan being developed by Reps. Bob Cupp (R-Lima) and John Patterson (D-Jefferson) would cost an additional \$267 million per year if phased in over six years, the lawmakers told members of the House Finance Committee on Wednesday. "Let me be perfectly clear. We must consider this as an 'investment in our future,'" Patterson said during sponsor testimony on HB305 (Cupp-Patterson). This first hearing on HB305 came more than three months after the representatives introduced the bill and explained updates to the funding proposal, which has been in the works for a couple years.

ELECTIONS 2019

The hours for the remaining days of absentee, in-person voting at local boards of election are as follows:

- Monday - Friday, Oct. 21-25: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Monday - Thursday, Oct. 28-31: 8 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 1: 8 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov 2: 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov 3: 1 p.m.-5 p.m.
- Monday, Nov. 4: 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

ELECTIONS 2020

Tom Young, a Republican member of the Montgomery County Board of Elections, told the *Dayton Daily News* that he is running for the 42nd House District in 2020. Young told the newspaper that he will resign his post with the board before he officially files to run for the House seat in December. He has previously served on the Wright State University Board of Trustees. He previously sought the seat after the death of Rep. Terry Blair, but Rep. Niraj Antani (R-Miamisburg) was backed by the county Republican Party for the seat instead.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The campaign of Democratic presidential candidate and South Bend, IN Mayor Pete Buttigieg announced the endorsements from former state Sen. Joe Schiavoni; Rep. Casey Weinstein (D-Hudson); retired Ohio Supreme Court Justice James Celebrezze; former congressional candidate Ken Harbaugh; Cincinnati City Councilman Greg Landsman; Newark City Councilman Sean Fennell; Toledo City Councilman Nick Komives; and South-Western City Schools Board of Education member David Donofrio.

FEDERAL

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for nearly 69 million Americans will increase 1.6 percent in 2020, the Social Security Administration announced. The 1.6 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 63 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2020. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on Dec. 31, 2019. (Note: Some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits.)

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) said that President Donald Trump's decision to pull U.S. troops out of Northern Syria was a "mistake," adding that the relatively small number of troops, plus air power, was keeping the region stable. The reduced U.S. presence in the region may have opened up a power vacuum, allowing Turkey and other bodies to seize power, the senator said. Portman told reporters on a conference call Thursday that he will cosponsor a resolution in the Senate sanctioning Turkey for its actions.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

While he said he still needed to take the temperature of his caucus, Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) said Wednesday that he expects the chamber will concur with changes the House made to a bill that would give a tax break to teachers buying school supplies with their own money. However, the House turned SB26 (Kunze) into an omnibus tax bill, undoing a move that prevented lobbyists and lawyers from collecting a small business tax deduction, and adding a sales tax exemption for feminine hygiene products.

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) announced Thursday changes to the bus grant process for schools from a "first come, first served" basis to accepting grant applications from Wednesday through Monday, Oct. 23-28 after which candidates will be selected by a random number generator. The new process is meant to distribute grants more fairly to schools and to give a better sense of how many schools are requesting transportation grants. A total of 25 grants will be awarded in three different mileage categories.

Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) made the following changes to the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid: Sen. Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City) is chair, Sen. Bob Hackett (R-London) is vice chair and Sen. Terry Johnson (R-McDermott) replaces Sen. Jay Hottinger (R-Newark). In addition, Johnson is appointed to the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

The House State and Local Government Committee continued its review of various state licenses Wednesday, assessing occupational licenses issued by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA).

Representatives of the ODOT Prequalification Review Board and the Transportation Review Advisory Council under the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) explained their duties to the state Sunset Review Committee Wednesday.

In other action, the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee reported out license plate bill HB286 (Lipps), naming bill HB342 (Baldrige) and HB295 (Hoops) which establishes requirements for low-speed electric scooters; the Senate Education Committee reported out SB89 (M. Huffman) which deals career-technical education; Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

reported out SB173 (Kunze) which designates September as "Hirschsprung's Disease Awareness Month"; the House Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Committee reported out SB7 (Lehner-Hackett) which provides for temporary state occupational licenses for members of the military and their spouses; the House Civil Justice Committee reported out HB272 (Oelslager-Hillyer) which expands a court's exercise of personal jurisdiction; and the House Criminal Justice Committee reported out HB119 (Stoltzfus) regarding traffic violations.

HUMAN SERVICES

Ohio collected at least 70 percent of current child support owed, according to figures released for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019, putting its rate above the national average of 65.8 percent, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced. FFY19 ended on Sept. 30, 2019. According to the department, its Office of Child Support collects and distributes nearly \$2 billion annually to more than one million Ohio children. The program is administered locally by 88 county child support enforcement agencies, which also locate noncustodial parents, establish legal paternity, establish child and medical support orders, as well as enforce support orders.

JUDICIAL

The Ohio Supreme Court announced Wednesday that Disciplinary Counsel Scott Drexel passed away at the age of 70 following a brief illness. The Court had previously announced his retirement, effective Sunday, Oct. 27. Drexel's longtime chief assistant, Joseph Caligiuri, was previously announced as his replacement.

The board governing members of the bar issued a series of opinions Thursday that warn magistrates, prosecutors and/or attorneys of potential conflicts of interest and similar improprieties in the practice of law, including the problem of magistrates' acting as both judicial officers and mediators. The Board of Professional Conduct says probate court magistrates may not engage in "extra-judicial activity" as elder care coordinators in guardianship cases because that role could force their disqualification and interfere with their primary duties as magistrates.

A divided Supreme Court of Ohio has reversed course and agreed to hear a wrongful death dispute that could decide Amazon and other retail websites' product liability for third-party vendors. The estate of 18-year-old Logan Stiner, whose death from pure caffeine powder peddled by an Arizona man and sold on Amazon triggered warning letters from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), says the world's third most profitable company promoted a drug with known risks and is therefore culpable. Amazon counters that it merely "facilitates" third-party retailers and is not their "supplier" under R.C. R.C. 2307.71.

LIQUOR/ALCOHOL

The Ohio delegation of craft beer companies recently won 15 medals at the 2019 Great American Beer Festival (GABF) in Denver, CO. The GABF is known as the "nation's most prestigious brewing competition," according to the Ohio Craft Brewers Association (OCBA).

MARIJUANA/HEMP

The Ohio Board of Pharmacy (OBP) recently awarded certificates of operation to four more medical marijuana dispensaries, bringing the total number operating in the state to 40. There are now 63,819 patients registered in the program. However, only 40,571 patients have legally purchased cannabis at a dispensary.

MEDICAID/MEDICAID REFORM

A new pass-through drug pricing model, managed care contract updates and an online dashboard for analyzing pharmacy expenses give the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) tools to better analyze and manage drug prices, Director Maureen Corcoran says. Corcoran and ODM data chief Matt Stearmer talked with *Hannah News* about the recent HealthPlan Data Solutions (HDS) report on pass-through pricing, the new dashboard and upcoming procurement of new managed care and pharmacy benefit manager contracts. The HDS report analyzed the first quarter of 2019, when the pass-through model first took effect, finding an increase of more than 5 percent in reimbursement to pharmacies, mostly from retail pharmacies filling generic prescriptions. The dashboard is available at <https://tinyurl.com/yxclagjn>.

The state Medicaid and mental health chiefs presented to lawmakers Thursday on their continued efforts to stabilize community behavioral health providers in the wake of a redesign initiative that is meant to improve services but has had its share of implementation problems. Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Director Maureen Corcoran and Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Director Lori Criss told the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC) about new claims payment requirements, efforts to recoup advance payments meant to ease the transition under the Behavioral Health Redesign Initiative (BHRI) and emergency rules instituted in August to help further smooth implementation problems. Those rules will put about \$50 million more into the system over a year, Corcoran said, but added some of those rules will need to be pulled back eventually or they'll lead to unsustainable spending.

MENTAL HEALTH

Ohio Peer Recovery Organizations (OhioPRO) launched Tuesday as a new statewide network for Ohio-based groups and programs that provide peer recovery mental health and substance abuse services and supports. The group's announcement came at the fourth Recovery Conference hosted by the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ohio plans to solicit bids to plug 200 orphan oil and gas wells this fiscal year, 10 or more times the number it sought to remediate several years ago, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) told lawmakers Wednesday. Jason Simmerman, engineering manager for the orphan well program at the department, provided an update to the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee on ODNR's efforts to ramp up well plugging per passage of 132-HB225 (Thompson). That legislation increased the share of Oil and Gas Well Fund money to be used for orphan well plugging and requires the department to prioritize wells for plugging based on the hazards they pose.

Gov. Mike DeWine and other Midwestern governors endorsed federal legislation that would provide nearly \$1.4 billion for fish and wildlife conservation efforts across the country. In a letter to

members of the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, DeWine and the governors of Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin said the "Recovering America's Wildlife Act" will prevent the further decline of fish and animals in their natural habitats.

PENSIONS

The financial outlook for the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (OP&F) worsened slightly because of market troubles in 2018, but the retirement system stayed within state funding standards in the latest valuation study, contrary to a consultant's predictions to lawmakers earlier this year. OP&F said it is projected to pay off its unfunded liabilities within 29 years, a regression from last year's 28 years but within the 30-year window established in state law. The funding outlook was calculated by actuarial firm Cavanaugh McDonald for the period ending Jan. 1, 2019.

PEOPLE

Delaware County Treasurer Jon Peterson, who'd also served as a state representative, Delaware County auditor and Franklin County finance director, died Thursday afternoon, Oct. 10 at the age of 65. Peterson was also a pastor at Zion United Church of Christ in Delaware. House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) recognized the loss, saying that Peterson was assistant minority whip during his previous time as speaker and was "a man of great heart who genuinely, sincerely cared about others."

State leaders recalled Monday the legacy of former Sen. Cooper Snyder after his death Sunday night. Snyder served in the Senate from 1979 to 1996.

The Ohio Nurses Association (ONA) named Rep. Don Manning (R-New Middletown) "Legislator of the Year" recently. Manning said he takes great pride in supporting Ohio's nurses. He introduced HB144, which prohibits hospitals from requiring registered nurses to work overtime as a condition of employment.

POLITICS

The Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) hosted the 2019 State Dinner in the Greater Columbus Convention Center on Sunday ahead of the Tuesday presidential primary debate in Westerville. Presidential candidates including South Bend, IN Mayor Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Niles), Andrew Yang and Tom Steyer spoke at the event. Democratic National Committee Chair Tom Perez, ODP Chairman David Pepper, ODP Vice Chairwoman Rhine McLin, U.S. Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-Columbus) and two judges running for Ohio Supreme Court, Jennifer Brunner and John O'Donnell, also spoke.

Statehouse and local leaders called for candidates in Tuesday night's Democratic presidential debate to offer solutions regarding lack of access to affordable menstrual hygiene products at a press conference in Westerville. They also called for the state to stop taxing those products, which was an element of House changes to SB26 (Kunze), a tax omnibus bill recently passed by the House and which the Senate is expected to concur with in the near future.

Democratic presidential candidates took the stage in Westerville Tuesday evening, addressing topics including the opioid epidemic, reproductive health care, workforce issues including the United Auto Workers (UAW) strike and automation, gun violence and oversight of major technology companies.

U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) received criticism from other candidates as the latest polling showed she'd surged to first place, but the harshest words were reserved for President Donald Trump. The first question was on House Democrats' impeachment inquiry, which candidates roundly supported.

POLLS/STUDIES

A new survey by Democratic pollster Public Policy Polling (PPP) on behalf of Innovation Ohio shows President Donald Trump underwater with Ohio voters. The poll showed Trump trailing a generic Democratic presidential candidate 48% to 47%. PPP noted Independents go against Trump 51% to 37%, and suburban areas go for the Democrat 53% to 40%.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine saw a rebound in his net approval rating in 2019's third quarter, according to polling company Morning Consult, as it rose to 15 percent. Previous reports had placed him at 18 percent net approval in Q1 and then 12 percent in Q2, with overall approval rising from 44 percent to 45 percent and now 48 percent. The most popular governors in the poll were Charlie Baker (R-MA), Larry Hogan (R-MD), Phil Scott (R-VT), Mark Gordon (R-WY) and Chris Sununu (R-NH). The least popular ones included Gina Raimondo (D-RI), Matt Bevin (R-KY), Kate Brown (D-OR), David Ige (D-HI) and Ned Lamont (D-CT).

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio Department of Public Safety's (ODPS) office of Ohio Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) announced recertification of eight more law enforcement agencies Thursday under statewide standards adopted by the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board, including Columbus Regional Airport Authority, Licking County Sheriff's Office and Kent State University. Logan Police Department launched the revolving three- to four-year recertification process last month, followed by Ohio State University and Powell and 10 other agencies on Sept. 30. Along with the airport, university and county, the following police departments have been recertified: Highland Heights, Mayfield Heights, Ontario, Shaker Heights and Upper Arlington.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary of State Frank LaRose Thursday announced 9,989 new entities filed to do business in Ohio in September, allowing Ohio to reach 101,352 new businesses in the first nine months of 2019. Ohio has never created 100,000 new businesses before October, LaRose's office said.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Ohio Department of Commerce's (DOC) Division of Real Estate and Professional Licensing is awarding \$75,357 to 65 cemeteries in 34 counties through the new Cemetery Grant Fund. The fund helps defray the costs of exceptional cemetery maintenance or training cemetery personnel in the maintenance and operation of a cemetery. It was created by 132-HB168 (Stein) which became effective Oct. 29, 2018.

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) recently launched a training for all state employees: "Disability Etiquette and Awareness." The training is an effort to support inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. The e-learning training module features interviews with several Ohioans who discuss

their disabilities and offers practical examples for interaction and communication. "Disability Etiquette and Awareness" helps participants become aware of respectful etiquette and proper language usage related to interactions with people with different types of disabilities.

TOBACCO/SMOKING

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) issued a reminder that Thursday, Oct. 17 marked the effective date for a new state law increasing the legal purchase age for tobacco products, including e-cigarette and vaping products, from 18 to 21, and making it illegal to give such products to others who are underage.

The change was included in the latest biennial budget, HB166 (Oelsalger). ODH said the law applies to the following products: cigarettes; electronic smoking devices such as vapes, e-cigarettes, and tanks; cigars; pipe tobacco; chewing tobacco; snuff; snus; dissolvable nicotine products; filters, rolling papers, pipes, blunts, or hemp wraps; liquids used in electronic smoking devices whether or not they contain nicotine; and vapor products -- any component, part, or additive that is intended for use in an electronic smoking device, a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit and is used to deliver the product.

TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE

The Ohio Department of Transportation started a series of public meetings this week on updates to Access Ohio 2045, the long-range statewide transportation plan. The first meetings were in Toledo, Lima and South Point. Future meetings, which run from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., with short presentations at 4:30 p.m. and 6 p.m., are set for Akron, Columbus, Cambridge, Dayton, Cincinnati, Marietta and Cleveland. More information is available at <http://access.ohio.gov>.

UTILITIES

The year-and-a-half battle over state-imposed cost caps on FirstEnergy's energy efficiency and peak demand reduction (PDR) programs ended Tuesday in an Ohio Supreme Court win for the embattled utility and a rebuff to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) and Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC).

VETERANS

The Ohio Department of Veterans Services recently announced the 20 members of the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2019. The inductees will be honored for their post-military accomplishments and achievements at the 28th annual Induction Ceremony on Nov. 7 at Radiant Life Church, 7100 Post Rd., Dublin, OH. The class represents 13 Ohio counties and four military branches. More information is available by calling 614-644-0898, emailing HallOfFame@dvs.ohio.gov or visiting www.OhioVets.gov.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Injured workers filling a new opioid prescription will be given disposal bags that neutralize unused leftovers under a new drug diversion initiative from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC), the DeWine administration announced Thursday. Starting next month, retail pharmacies will automatically issue the bags to workers filling an opioid prescription for the first time in the past 12

months. BWC Administrator Stephanie McCloud said about 175 injured workers per month fit that description. Pharmacy computer systems will be programmed to prompt pharmacists filling the prescriptions to provide the bags, she said.

WORKFORCE

Union members who miss paychecks during a labor strike would be allowed to collect unemployment compensation under legislation proposed by Rep. Jeff Crossman (D-Parma). Currently, striking workers are considered to have left their jobs "voluntarily," so they don't qualify for benefits, Crossman said during a Statehouse press conference. He was joined by Rep. Lisa Sobecki (D-Toledo), who announced she will introduce a resolution urging Congress to allow striking workers and their families to apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

SENATE: No legislative activity.

HOUSE: No legislative activity