

OPRA FRIDAY FIVE

News, Resources and Events for OPRA Members

MAY 14, 2021

Senate Committees: The state budget season enters its final phases over the next several weeks, where the Ohio Senate will be proposing their changes to HB 110, Ohio's operating budget bill. Over the last few weeks, OPRA provided in-person coalition testimony in the Senate Health and Finance committees, as well as numerous meetings with Senate partners to solidify and gain support for our budget priorities. We are deeply appreciative of all of the members who have provided written testimony to these committees, as it has truly made an impact in our advocacy work. Special thanks to Diane Beastrom, Bob Heinzerling, Tim Neville, Kurt Miller and Jeff Johnson, who all provided amazing in-person testimonies to these key Senate committees. Click the pictures on the right to see Thursday's testimony to the Senate Finance Committee. OPRA and coalition testimony begin around the 2:50 mark. Please contact Pete or Christine with any questions about the state budget.



ICF Rule: On Tuesday, [CMS announced a new rule effective immediately](#) for ICFs intended to improve vaccine access for individuals with disabilities who reside in an ICF and for staff who work in an ICF. The new rule will require that all staff and residents are educated and offered the vaccine. It states that policies and procedures must be developed and implemented that include offering the vaccine as well as offering education regarding the risks/benefits/potential side effects of the vaccine. Additionally, The rule encourages but does not require ICFs to report vaccinations to the CDC (ICFs do not have the reporting infrastructure in place to report directly to the CDC database). The rule is currently open for public comment, which OPRA plans to provide. We do have several concerns and are seeking member feedback, which can be sent directly to Rachel at Rhayes@opra.org.

Unemployment Benefits: Ohio took a few major steps regarding enhanced unemployment insurance in a hope to improve the workforce situation and ensure people get back to work as the Ohio economy continues to reopen. On Monday, Governor DeWine announced that on May 23rd, the job search requirements will be restored to those receiving Unemployment benefits, which had been waived for many because of the pandemic. Then on Thursday afternoon, [DeWine announced that Ohio will be withdrawing from the enhanced unemployment benefits altogether](#) on June 26th. We have heard from several members about how the enhanced benefit exacerbated the hiring/workforce challenges and we hope these changes are one piece of improving the current workforce crisis.

EFMAP- At long last, yesterday CMS released guidance on how states can use the enhanced EFMAP established through the American Rescue Plan, which provided states with an additional 10% of federal matching funds on qualifying HCBS services. We've been in discussions with DODD and system partners on potential uses of these funds for the past several weeks, which can be utilized to enhance HCBS services through July of 2024. The enhanced funds must be used to improve and enhance the HCBS program and can include items such as new services, rate enhancements, workforce development activities and more. [Click here to read the 26-page CMS guidance document.](#) Please reach out to Scott or Christine with any questions about the enhanced FMAP.



In Case You Missed It...

Additional Updates From The OPRA Team and System Partners



Thank you to everyone who attended and presented at this year's virtual Spring Conference. We hope you all had a great experience and we are so grateful for your participation in our 2nd virtual conference. A huge thanks to all of our amazing sponsors and exhibitors, without whom we could not put on events like this. We look forward to seeing you all in person in the Fall. Thanks again to everyone who was a part of this special event!!!

Public Health Orders: Of all of the COVID-related news this week, one of the most significant was [Governor DeWine's announcement](#) that almost all of the public health orders issued by the Ohio Dept of Health will be lifted on June 2nd. There is still uncertainty about what this means going forward, especially as it pertains to DODD guidance and the enhanced rate structure for day and vocational services. There are several DODD/system partner meetings over the next week and we should have a much clearer picture on how this change impacts DD services soon.

Technology Advisory Committee: DODD held the first meeting of the Tech Advisory Committee this week to begin the work of implementing and operationalizing the recommendations made by the Technology 1st Council in 2018. There were several initiatives and benchmarks laid out in that report around expanding access to tech, the number of people using tech, ensuring tech is a part of CB strategic plans, and ensuring capacity for tech services. [Click here to see the meeting materials.](#)

CEO Training: OPRA will be offering the training sessions to satisfy the CEO requirements in the current provider certification rule. The training, to be held on June 10th, is offered complimentary to any attendees of the Spring virtual conference, as the Spring conference is when we have historically offered these sessions. Topics include MUI updates, Person-Centered Planning and Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy. Click on the flyer to the right to learn more and register for the upcoming training. Please contact Melissa at Mfannon@opra.org with any questions.



Upcoming Events

[5/20: OPRA Joint Day & Employment Services Committees](#)

[5/18: DODD Trauma-Informed Care Summit](#)

News and Resources

["DeWine's bombshell address: Lifting Ohio health orders, \\$1 million vaccination lottery and more"](#)

["Ohio remains below average in new coronavirus cases"](#)

["Vaccine 'a game changer' for the disabled, including those in group homes"](#)

["CDC: When You've Been Fully Vaccinated"](#)

