

Top Advocacy Issues

AUTUMN 2019

The 133rd General Assembly has wrapped up the budget process and Governor Mike DeWine has signed the FY 2020-2021 budget into state law. The OSMA was on-hand for the budget proceedings, and is now shifting gears as the legislature and state administration turn to other issues in Ohio's health care environment. The OSMA anticipates continued deliberations and potential action on the following top issues:

1. Deregulation of the Practice of Medicine

The OSMA is focusing on decreasing the regulatory burden imposed upon physicians, and is confident that Ohio can regulate medical practice and keep patients safe without creating unnecessary barriers to care, which cause problems for physicians and impose undue burden upon practices. Led by OSMA President Susan Hubbell, MD, the OSMA is conducting the *Healthier Ohio – 2020 & Beyond* campaign to identify factors that might impede the delivery of high quality medical care and develop potential solutions. The campaign highlights three key public health themes: diabetes care, pain management, and smoking cessation.

2. Out-of-Network Billing, or “Surprise Billing”

The need to protect patients from unanticipated, costly medical bills which arise from seeking medical care and unknowingly being treated by an out-of-network provider has been a hot topic across the country. Discussion on “surprise billing” arose during the state budget proceedings in Ohio this year, and language was proposed. However, it was struck down by a governor's veto due to the complexity of the issue when provider and hospital groups expressed serious concerns. The medical community agrees that patients should be protected from surprise bills, but a more comprehensive, efficient solution is needed. The OSMA expects that this fall, work on this issue will continue.

3. Mental Health Parity

Several years of work with a coalition seeking to bring mental health insurance coverage parity to Ohioans will culminate this fall with the introduction of legislation on the topic. A recent report assigns 32 states, including Ohio, a failing grade for ensuring equal access to mental health and addiction treatment for their citizens, even though federal law states that health insurers must provide coverage for the treatment of mental health and addiction that is equal to the coverage provided for physical illnesses and conditions. The OSMA will work to support robust state statute in order to give regulators a strong tool for enforcement of parity.

4. Scope of Practice

The OSMA is working on several scope of practice issues and expects those issues to continue to remain prevalent in the coming months. We will continue to advocate for the physician-led, team-based approach to care with regard to scope of practice proposals. Ongoing scope of practice issues include:

- Independent, unsupervised practice – Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs)
- Expanded scope of practice – Certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs)
- Prescriptive authority – Psychologists



5. Decreasing Barriers to Treatment for Mental Illness & Substance Use Disorders

Many groups in the medical community are engaging in collaborative movements that seek to reduce and eliminate obstacles that prevent Ohio patients from accessing needed medical treatment for substance use disorders and mental illnesses. The OSMA continues to take part in efforts related to removing barriers patients face.

6. Medical Price Transparency

The OSMA expects that the legislature and interested parties will continue to deliberate in pursuit of price transparency that will allow Ohio patients to anticipate costs and make more informed decisions about their care. The issue resurfaced during the budget process earlier this year, and the language in the budget was ultimately vetoed by the governor after the medical community raised the alarm about its unworkable, damaging implications. The administration asked that all parties involved continue to work toward an effective solution.

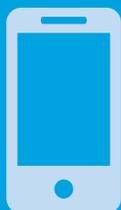
7. Medicaid

The OSMA recently submitted feedback given to us by our members to the Ohio Department of Medicaid in response to a request for comments on the Medicaid managed care system in light of the upcoming rebid process. Overall, the OSMA's letter focused on key issues such as the need for increased transparency and plan accountability, reforms to the grievances and appeals processes, bolstered provider support, and more streamlined and efficient patient care coordination and management. We expect to continue monitoring the ongoing rebid process and any overall changes the state administration might seek to make to the Medicaid program.

8. Ban on Tanning for Minors

The OSMA will join the Ohio Dermatological Association in supporting a measure that would prohibit individuals under the age of 18 from utilizing tanning bed services. This legislation would, if enacted, protect our state's youth from exposure to dangerous ultraviolet radiation from tanning beds. UV exposure drastically increases the chance of developing skin cancer, particularly when exposure occurs before adulthood.

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