



State Legislation Puts Consumer Protections and Jobs At Risk

The House Health Committee is hearing testimony in support of and in opposition to three pieces of legislation:

- HJR2 HEALTH CARE COVERAGE (MAAG R) To preserve the freedom of Ohioans to choose their health care and health care coverage.
- HB11 PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (SEARS B) To prohibit state departments and agencies from implementing or enforcing a provision of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act without meeting certain conditions.
- HB85 HEALTH INSURANCE (HACKETT R) To prohibit requiring an individual to obtain or maintain health insurance.

While well-intentioned by their respective sponsors, the debate around the resolution and bills is raising concerns among Ohioans who are being helped by the Affordable Care Act and distracts us from finding solutions that will ensure health care coverage for all Ohioans and control health care costs.

In particular, HB11 would delay the administration's ability to prepare for the Health Insurance Exchange, the web-based marketplace where small businesses will have affordable insurance options for their employees. and individuals and families without employer-sponsored insurance will be able to secure affordable, quality health insurance.

The bill will also hamper the newly created Office of Health Transformation (OHT) in achieving its goal of better care and better outcomes while reducing costs in Medicaid and the entire system. Funding opportunities through the Affordable Care Act will help the OHT to make great strides in coordinating care to improve outcomes and lower costs especially for the 5 percent of Medicaid patients who account for half of Medicaid spending. The requirements of HB 11 will hamper OHT with red tape and may prevent OHT from making timely applications.

Already, thousands of Ohioans are being helped by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and many more will be helped as more provisions are phased in between now and 2014. Sponsors of the above bills say these proposals emphasize that the patient remains the most important figure in health care—not the government. But these bills will put bureaucratic roadblocks in the way of policymakers seeking to improve care for patients. Most consumers support provisions of the ACA to improve access to affordable insurance coverage, to prevent insurance companies from getting between patients and their doctors, and to give access to coverage to tens of thousands of Ohioans who have been shut out the health care system because of pre-existing conditions.

Delaying implementation of or repealing the Affordable Care Act does more than put the health of Ohioans at-risk—it also will cost Ohio jobs. The Center for American Progress estimates that Ohio will lose 5,187 jobs if health care reform is repealed. We cannot afford that.

The Affordable Care Act is already working to make Ohioans and our economy healthier.

*For more information, contact Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage,
Cathy Levine, co-chair, 614-456-0060 or Col Owens, co-chair, 513-300-3042.*

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