

OHIO ACADEMY
of Nutrition and Dietetics

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To: Ohio Senate Finance Committee
From: Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
RE: Executive Budget Recommendations for Medicaid FY 2024-2025
From: Cynthia Blocksom, MEd, RDN, LD, MCHES, FAND and Pat McKnight, MS, RDN, LD, Co-Chair Public Policy
Kay Mavko, MS, RDN, LD, State Regulatory Specialist
Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

May 25, 2023

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding Medicaid requests in HB 33 Budget bill for fiscal years 2024 – 2025.

The Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics represents over 2,400 Dietetics and Nutrition Professionals in Ohio who work in various settings including colleges and universities, community and public health, hospitals and health systems, residential care facilities, dialysis centers, schools, fitness centers, research facilities, and food and agricultural businesses. Our members provide scientifically based health care and nutrition services - including Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) that helps prevent disease and supports medical treatment for a host of chronic health conditions and illnesses - including diabetes, heart disease, renal disease, obesity, malnutrition, etc.

We understand that it is challenging to prioritize investments in critical areas such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and public safety when developing HB 33 2024-2025 Budget bill. Overall, we support the budget bill as passed by the House of Representatives, and we are particularly interested in maintenance of the 5% increase in funding requested by the Department of Medicaid for providers who serve Medicaid participants.

Ohio dietitians have been included as Medicaid providers of MNT services since 2012. Our initial rates for reimbursement were set very low, have never increased, and in many cases do not cover Ohio dietitians' costs of doing business. This discrepancy has caused some dietitians to exclude Medicaid participants from their client base - thus reducing Medicaid participants' access to qualified nutrition professionals. Poor access to nutrition care can result in reduced quality of health, increased incidence of nutrition-related conditions and diseases (like obesity and diabetes), medical complications, and higher healthcare costs – all of which can affect Ohio's long- term success.

Our discussions with Medicaid about reimbursement and access to MNT services have been positive. They have indicated that the needed increase in reimbursement for MNT services can be met if the 5% budget increase remains intact. Therefore, OAND requests that you support the Department of Medicaid's request for a 5% increase in Competitive Wages for Direct Care Work Force Stability and greater access for Medicaid recipients as requested in HB 33.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Cynthia Blocksom, MEd, RDN, LD, MCHES, FAND and Pat McKnight, MS, RDN, LD
Co-Chairs Public Policy Panel
Kay Mavko, MS, RDN, LD
State Regulatory Specialist
Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
(614) 668-9036

