



## OHIO JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

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### Ohio Senate Medicaid Committee

Interested Party Testimony -- Sub. House Bill 96

May 6, 2025

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Chairman Romanchuk, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Senate Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Jon Honeck, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association. I'd like to discuss two provisions in House Bill 96 that are related to the counties' work on Medicaid eligibility.

County department of job and family service (CDJFS) agencies administer one of the largest health, human service, and workforce systems in the nation, with one in four Ohioans receiving assistance from the local office at any point in time. The CDJFS is responsible for administering programs to the state's most economically vulnerable citizens. Systems operated through the local agencies include cash assistance, food assistance, childcare, Medicaid (including long-term care, children's health insurance and services to aged, blind and disabled), adoption, adult protective services, child protective services, foster care, local workforce initiatives and child support programs. It is the county's primary duty to ensure clients receive the services they need and are entitled to, as well as ensure program integrity.

County JFS departments often determine initial eligibility for several means tested programs, including Medicaid, at one time. It is more efficient for the taxpayer and for the client to have eligibility done at once, as we know when people come to our system to apply for benefits, they come to us in crisis – often, the loss of a job or a change in household composition.

#### **1. County Medicaid Eligibility Determination Performance Incentives**

As introduced, the bill contained \$5 million for county Medicaid eligibility performance incentives in each state fiscal year (ALI 655522). The House removed these incentive funds, and we request the Senate restore them. These funds were a continuation of incentives currently made available to counties, starting with SFY 24 and continuing into SFY 25. Counties were able to leverage these funds to support additional casework time by funding overtime hours for existing staff – they have become a critical management tool in many counties, allowing them to stay current or dig out from high volume application times, such as marketplace open enrollment or mass layoffs.

In SFY 24, incentive criteria were based on counties having met the 90% benchmark for completing assigned Medicaid renewals in the 12<sup>th</sup> month period following the public health emergency, and for the greatest improvement in pending backlogs. In SFY 25, incentive criteria were based on counties maintaining their reduced application backlog and remaining timely in their processing of Medicaid renewals.

County agencies have many competing priorities on caseworker time, and performance incentives help ensure that adequate resources are available for Medicaid work when staff time is limited.

## **2. Requirement to utilize third party data and perform quarterly eligibility checks**

The House included a requirement that the Ohio Department of Medicaid utilize third-party data sources and systems to conduct eligibility “checks” on a quarterly basis (RC 5163.50). Quarterly eligibility checks may not be permissible under current federal law, depending on how a “check” is defined. Depending on what implementation of this unknown may look like, we hope to have further conversations to ensure counties have the bandwidth to meet expectations for those cases that might require manual processing.

Separately, it would be important to understand what data is already available to the Ohio Benefits system. (For reference, the attached document was included as a part of the Ohio Department of Medicaid’s testimony last week.) Any missing data pieces that could be provided by a third party should be provided in a raw data format to be leveraged directly within the state’s eligibility system for administrative efficiency. Cumbersome additional reports external to the system require manual review, slowing down administrative efficiency, often for little value added.

We appreciate the efforts of the legislature and Department to continue to optimize the eligibility process. The more that we streamline the eligibility process and our system, the more we can ensure program integrity while also freeing up county caseworker time to focus less on transactional paperwork, and more on transformative casework.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.

## Sources and Uses of Data

ENROLLMENT & ELIGIBILITY					
Validation	Source	Data Used to Validate	New Applicants	Renewal	Frequent Wage or Employment Check
Income and Employment Verification	IRS	Income data	X	X	X
	SSA Interfaces and Files (incl BENDEX, SOX, TBQ Buy-in)	Income data incl. new income or income changes, benefit amounts, termination dates, health insurance data, citizenship, and SSN, DOB, DOD Medicare receipt, and application status (for SSI and SSDI)	X	X	X
	State Wage Information Collection Agency (SWICA)	Income	X	X	X
	State Unemployment Compensation (UC) TALX/The Work Number	Change in UC Benefits Earned Income	X	X	
Special Benefits and Support Checks	Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC)	Payments made for workers' comp	X	X	
	Office of Child Support Enforcement	Medicaid eligible child claims	X	X	
Life Status Checks	Vital Statistics & Department of Commerce National Technical Information Service	Paternity lead for medical child support, birth and death	X	X	X
	National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) & PARIS	Individual newly hired, Federal wages match, Veterans Affairs (VA) match, Interstate match		X	X
Incarceration and Facility Status	Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction	Individuals incarcerated 30 days		X	
	Ohio Department of Youth Services	Currently in state facilities or recently released		X	
Immigration and Citizenship Verification	Department of Homeland Security (DHS) SAVE	Immigration on status	X	X	
Household Income Validation	Annual Household Income (Federal Data Services Hub)	Verified Attested Income			X
	Income Eligibility Verification on System (IEVS)	Income and resources			X

Interested party testimony from Director Corcoran to the committee on April 29, 2025.  
*Appendix 3 Eligibility and Enrollment*