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**Ohio Speech & Hearing Governmental Affairs Coalition
Legislative Activities Report
October 2016**

The Ohio Senate recently announced that it has canceled five of the six sessions it had scheduled before the November election. The Senate's cancellation of the session dates means that any remaining legislative work will be put off until lame duck session after the November 8th election. The Ohio House, which had not scheduled session dates prior to the election, is still scheduled to return the week after the election.

This reduced Senate legislative calendar is important to OSHGAC because of our work on pursuing an amendment to HB 89 in order to solve the current problems with the Medicaid Schools program. The amendment that we are working with our partners on would make it possible for OTs, PTs, SLPs and AuDs to "order, refer and prescribe" their own services for Medicaid students with IEPs. This will eliminate the need for a physician prescription. The goal is to get this amendment in and the bill passed before the end of this year. Thus, far there appears to be support from the necessary legislative leaders to make that happen; however, the expedited session schedule will make our work in securing the amendment a bit more challenging.

Also on the education front, GAC will be meeting with our partners – other related services providers, ODE, the Department of Higher Education, the school administrators and the ESCs – on October 18th to discuss our next steps on a possible legislative approach to address the shortages of related services providers in the schools. Although the shortage of school psychologists appears to be the most urgent issue facing schools, our survey data shows that within 5 years the shortages of SLPS will be at a critical level, similar to what we saw back in 2005 – 2006. Our hope is to get ahead of that curve with a collaborative proposal that can address education, recruitment and retention barriers for all related services providers in the schools. We hope to be able to move forward on all of that when the new General Assembly convenes in January.

On the audiology front, GAC is working with Ohio Medicaid to address concerns with the current policy that requires consumers to procure their hearing aid batteries monthly. This creates a travel expense and scheduling burden for the consumer and an administrative burden for the provider. Currently, the BCMH program approves batteries for one year and the yearly supply of batteries can be provided all at one time. This reduces costs of claim processing, transfer of funds, and other administrative burdens for the consumer and the provider. GAC has a call scheduled to discuss this further with Ohio Medicaid on October 13th; it is our hope that they might decide to change their policy to an annual one, similar to BCMH.

Also on the Audiology front, we are working with the Governor's office on a temporary resolution declaring October 2016 "Audiology Awareness Month" similar to what we have done in previous years. In addition, we are working on a longer term strategy to get this recognition into the Ohio Revised Code so that the celebration is an on-going annual event, similar to what we accomplished with the statutory provision recognizing May as "Better Speech and Hearing Month."

In other news, Rep. Jeff McClain, a former chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, recently announced he is resigning from the House in October to become the director of tax and economic policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Rep. McClain, who was term-limited at the end of the year, also served on the House Finance Committee and the House Committee on Community and Family Advancement.

Also of note, Ohio's unemployment rate continued trending downward in August, reaching 4.7% compared to 4.8% the previous month. Ohio's unemployment rate is below the national rate of 4.9%. Ohio's rate has dropped every month since April, when it ticked up to 5.2%.

We have been tracking the following legislation that has been introduced in the 131st General Assembly:

HB64 OPERATING BUDGET (SMITH R) To make operating appropriations for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2017, and to provide authorization and conditions for the operation of state programs.

Current Status: 6/30/2015

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Eff. 6/30/15; certain provisions effective 9/29/15, other dates

HB89 MEDICAID SCHOOL PROGRAM (DEVITIS A) Regarding the Medicaid School Program.

Current Status: 5/17/2016

Referred to the Senate Education Committee

HB98 CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH AWARENESS DAY (BROWN T) To

designate May 14 as "Childhood Apraxia of Speech Awareness Day."

Current Status: 2/14/2016

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Eff. 5/17/16

HB109 STATE HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGE (STINZIANO M, ANTONIO N) To create the Ohio Health Benefit Exchange.

Current Status: 4/28/2015

House Insurance Committee

First Hearing

HB157 HEALTH INSURANCE-MEDICAID (BUTLER, JR. J, JOHNSON T) To revise the laws governing health insurance coverage, medical malpractice claims, the Medicaid program, health care provider discipline, and required and permitted health care provider disclosures; and to create the Nonstandard Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangement Program and to terminate that program after five years.

Current Status: 5/5/2015

House Insurance Committee

Second Hearing

HB184 MUSIC THERAPY LICENSING (DOVILLA M, ANTONIO N) To require the licensure of music therapists and to require the State Medical Board to regulate the licensure and practice of music therapists.

Current Status: 4/19/2016

House Commerce and Labor Committee

Third Hearing

HB213 OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE RENEWAL (BRINKMAN T) To make occupational licenses subject to annual renewal become biennial licenses and to permit a licensee to take continuing education courses online.

Current Status: 4/19/2016

House Commerce and Labor Committee

Fourth Hearing

HB350 AUTISM TREATMENT-COVERAGE (GROSSMAN C, TERHAR L) To mandate coverage of autism treatment.

Current Status: 5/25/2016

REPORTED OUT

House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee

Fifth Hearing

HB431 DAY DESIGNATION (SHEEHY M, PATTERSON J) To designate February 17th as "Annie Glenn Communication Disorders Awareness Day."

Current Status: 5/31/2016

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Eff. 8/31/16

HB483 MBR-DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (AMSTUTZ R) To modify programs administered by the Department of Developmental Disabilities to modify certain laws pertaining to tax levies for developmental disabilities, to modify certain laws regarding ABLE savings accounts and Ohio's disability savings account program, to designate October as "Disability History and Awareness Month," to make an appropriation.

Current Status: 7/13/2016

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Eff. 10/12/16

HB488 CIVIL LIABILITY-VOLUNTEER HEALTH CARE (SPRAGUE R) To modify the qualified immunity from civil liability for volunteer health care services provided to indigent and uninsured persons and to permit health care professionals to earn continuing education credit by providing volunteer health care services to indigent and uninsured persons.

Current Status: 4/26/2016

House Judiciary Committee

First Hearing

HB523 MEDICAL MARIJUANA (HUFFMAN S) To authorize the use of marijuana for medical purposes and to establish the Medical Marijuana Control Program.

Current Status: 6/8/2016

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Eff. 9/8/16

SB3 HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOL DISTRICT EXEMPTION (HITE C, FABER K) To exempt high-performing school districts from certain laws.

Current Status: 1/27/2016

House Education Committee

Fourth Hearing

SB17 MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY (CAFARO C) To require the Medicaid program to cover the eligibility expansion group authorized by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and to make an appropriation.

Current Status: 2/11/2015

Senate Medicaid Committee

First Hearing

SB32 MEDICAID COVERAGE-TELEMEDICINE (TAVARES C) Regarding insurance and Medicaid coverage of telemedicine services.

Current Status: 3/25/2015

Senate Medicaid Committee

First Hearing

SB72 MEDICAID-PROMPT PAYMENT (TAVARES C) To specify that the Ohio prompt payment law applies to payment of claims by Medicaid managed care organizations.

Current Status: 3/25/2015
Senate Medicaid Committee
First Hearing

SB86 NOT-FOR-PROFIT QUARTER AUCTIONS (GARDNER R) To permit charitable organizations to conduct not-for-profit quarter auctions.

Current Status: 4/14/2015
Senate Finance Committee
First Hearing

SB90 HEALTH CARE WORKER-IDENTIFICATION (TAVARES C) To require that a health care professional wear identification when providing care or treatment in the presence of a patient.

Current Status: 11/18/2015
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
First Hearing

SB94 MEDICAID SCHOOL PROGRAM (BACON K, LEHNER P) Regarding the Medicaid School Program.

Current Status: 3/25/2015
Senate Medicaid Committee
First Hearing

SB98 HEARING AID-COVERAGE (BROWN E) To require health insurers to offer coverage for hearing aids.

Current Status: 3/24/2015
Senate Insurance Committee
First Hearing

SB208 STATE INCOME TAX (BEAGLE B) To make technical changes to the state income tax law, to modify the requirements for receiving the joint filing credit.

Current Status: 11/15/2015
SIGNED BY GOVERNOR
Eff. 2/15/16; certain provisions effective 11/15/15

SB268 STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS-EMPLOYER (SEITZ B) To modify Ohio civil rights laws related to employment and the statute of limitations for other specified claims against an employer.

Current Status: 5/18/2016
Senate Civil Justice Committee
Second Hearing

SB292 IMMUNITY-VOLUNTEER HEALTH SERVICES (LEHNER P) To modify the qualified immunity from civil liability for volunteer health care services provided to indigent and uninsured persons and to permit health care professionals to earn continuing education credit by providing volunteer health care services to indigent and uninsured

persons.

Current Status: 4/20/2016

Senate Civil Justice Committee

First Hearing