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**Ohio Speech and Hearing Government Affairs Coalition
Legislative Activities Report
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The DeWine Administration unveiled its proposal for the \$171.6 billion FY2022-2023 biennial budget. The budget bill proposes funding from the General Revenue Fund (GRF) at \$35.39 billion for FY 2022 and \$39.27 billion for FY 2023 for a total of \$74.66 billion in GRF spending. Office of Budget and Management Director Kim Murnieks said the budget was carefully constructed so that we are allocating one-time resources for one-time expenses. The budget proposal does not increase taxes and does not borrow from the state's "rainy day" fund. Helping Ohio's financial situation was the federal government taking on an increased share of Medicaid spending. The increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage has saved the state about \$300 million per quarter. While it is uncertain whether this assistance will be extended past 2021, it has allowed the state to redirect resources away from Medicaid and to other programs.

In a press conference announcing the budget proposal, Governor DeWine highlighted \$1 billion in targeted one-time spending aimed at the state's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the \$1 billion investment, \$450 million will be used to "strengthen Ohio communities" through investing \$250 million in expanding broadband access throughout the state and \$200 million in key infrastructure projects. The infrastructure investment will be administered through the Ohio Department of Development. The blue book described the investment as, "funding for community projects such as water/sewer infrastructure, roads, downtown revitalization programs, and demolition." Governor DeWine said the \$200 million is designed to attract more jobs and bring more investment to communities throughout the state. The DeWine Administration also highlighted \$70 million for workforce development programs, focusing on the TechCred program (created in the last budget) and an investment in workforce development efforts in economically distressed communities.

Hearings on the FY 2022-2023 budget began in the House Finance Committee. The process began after the administration outlined its priorities for the upcoming biennium. The committee heard testimony from directors of various departments and agencies, giving legislators their first opportunity to drill into the more finite details of the massive spending plan.

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Stephanie McCloud outlined the numerous budget proposals of her department for the House Finance Committee, but lawmakers' focus remained largely on the COVID-19 pandemic and health orders. Director McCloud said about 80% of the department's budget for Fiscal Year 2021 was federal funding, and the overall budget will drop from \$1.1 billion in FY 2021 to \$842 million in FY 2022 and \$592 million in FY 2023. "This is due to an expected reduction in federal funding as we bring the COVID-19 pandemic under control," she said. Several lawmakers used the opportunity to question the director on the state's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Rep. Allison Russo (D-Upper Arlington) said many of her constituents have been "looking for a needle in a haystack" to get access to a vaccine. The director said that the department is doing dry runs on a new website, which will start with limited functionality at first, she said. It might start with a list of locations with available vaccines and then grow to allow people to register for appointments. Four initiatives aimed at the most vulnerable Ohioans are key parts of the ODH budget proposal, including the creation of a hospital licensure, granting ODH the authority to quickly intervene and remove patients from nursing facilities if patients' health and safety is at immediate risk, extending survey intervals for state-licensed residential care facilities, and investing in state's children. \$5.5 million in GRF over the biennium will focus on reducing infant mortality, particularly stark racial disparities, she said. Another focus is addressing childhood lead poisoning, with \$7.15 million per year to increase the lead hazard control program, Director McCloud said. Efforts in health equity will include initiatives that identify social determinants of health and implement innovative ways to support health improvements in at-risk populations, Director McCloud said.

Of particular interest to GAC, the budget provides \$636,709 in both FY 2022 and FY 2023 for the State Speech and Hearing Professionals Board. There were also updates to dyslexia screening requirements in schools as a result of HB 436, which was passed last session. Included in the ODH budget is \$200,000 per year for the Mothers and Children Safety Net Services, which is to be dedicated to assist families with hearing-impaired children under 21-years of age in purchasing hearing aids.

The main operating budget must be passed and signed by the governor no later than June 30th. In addition to the budget bill, we have seen over 150 bills already introduced this session. While the main operating budget will steal the focus for the next five months, we do expect numerous other legislative initiatives to move during this time.

Ohio lifted its statewide curfew which has been in place since November 19th. The move comes as the number of COVID-19 patients in the state's hospitals dropped below 2,500 for seven consecutive days. The original curfew, from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., was established as a compromise with Ohio's bar and restaurant industry instead of closing businesses during the last surge in COVID-19 spread. Governor DeWine said he might reimpose the curfew in the future if the number of COVID-19 patients spikes, but he offered no specific criteria that would trigger another curfew.

Below is a list of legislation we are currently tracking during the 134th Ohio General Assembly:

HB1 CREATE NEW SCHOOL FINANCING SYSTEM (CALLENDER J, SWEENEY B) To create a new school financing system for fiscal year 2022 and each fiscal year thereafter.

Current Status: 2/11/2021 - House Finance, (First Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-1>

HB13 MODIFY THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW (GRENDALL D, FRAIZER M) To modify the campaign finance law and to declare an emergency.

Current Status: 2/4/2021 - Referred to Committee House Government Oversight

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-13>

HB60 PERMIT MEDICAL MARIJUANA FOR AUTISM (BRENT J, SEITZ B) To authorize the use of medical marijuana for autism spectrum disorder.

Current Status: 2/9/2021 - House Health, (First Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-60>

HB90 OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNOR'S AND HEALTH ORDERS (WIGGAM S, EDWARDS J) To establish legislative oversight of the Governor's executive orders, certain public health orders, and emergency rules, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee.

Current Status: 2/17/2021 - House State and Local Government, (Second Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-90>

HB103 REGARDS ADOPTION/DURATION EMERGENCY RULES (MERRIN D) Regarding the adoption and duration of emergency administrative rules.

Current Status: 2/10/2021 - Introduced

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-HB-103>

SB3 NURSE LICENSURE COMPACT (ROEGNER K) To enter into the Nurse Licensure Compact.

Current Status: 2/10/2021 - **REPORTED OUT**, Senate Health, (Third Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-3>

SB5 PHYSICAL THERAPY LICENSURE COMPACT (ROEGNER K) To enter into the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact.

Current Status: 2/10/2021 - Referred to Committee House Health

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-5>

SB6 MEDICAL LICENSURE COMPACT (ROEGNER K, HUFFMAN S) To enter into the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact.

Current Status: 2/3/2021 - Senate Health, (Second Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-6>

SB7 OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LICENSURE COMPACT (ROEGNER K) To enter into the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact.

Current Status: 2/10/2021 - Referred to Committee House Health

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-7>

SB9 REDUCE REGULATIONS (MCCOLLEY R, ROEGNER K) To require certain agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions in their administrative rules.

Current Status: 2/10/2021 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (Third Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-9>

SB22 LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT-PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS (JOHNSON T, MCCOLLEY R) To establish legislative oversight of the Governor's executive orders and certain public health orders, including by establishing the Ohio Health Oversight and Advisory Committee.

Current Status: 2/16/2021 - Senate Government Oversight and Reform, (Third Hearing)

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-22>

SB60 MEDICAID ESTATE RECOVERY-INFORMED CONSENT (SCHAFFER T) To require Medicaid applicants to certify that they have been notified about the Medicaid estate recovery program.

Current Status: 2/10/2021 - Referred to Committee Senate Health

State Bill Page: <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA134-SB-60>