



Medicaid Expansion in Ohio: The Long and Winding Road in 5 Minutes

The GCC Story

“How long, O Lord? How long?” Psalm 6

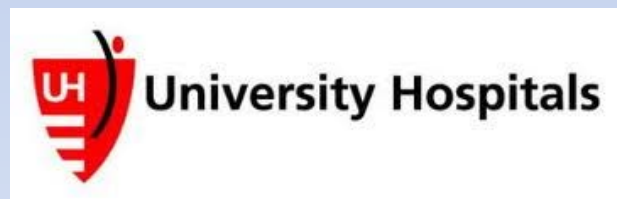


Collateral Sanctions Reform Bill Signing: July 2012



NEO-MEC

Fall 2012





Health Care Assembly at Olivet: January 2013

Lobby Days



Ohio's Gov. John Kasich to seek Medicaid Expansion

“Saying that an expansion of Medicaid will help some of the poorest Ohioans, Gov. John Kasich included the much-anticipated announcement in his two-year budget proposal Monday. Greater Cleveland Congregations pledged Monday to do our part to make sure Ohio legislators understand that expanding Medicaid will keep Ohioans tax dollars here in our state, working to help our economy, our health and our state budget.”

-Tuesday, February 5, 2013, Plain Dealer



Meeting with Gov. Kasich: March 2013



Taking the Fight to Columbus: April and July 2013

Advocates of Ohio Medicaid expansion decry reports of plan being nixed

Brandon Blackwell, Northeast Ohio Media Group By Brandon Blackwell, Northeast Ohio Media Group

Email the author | Follow on Twitter

on April 08, 2013 at 6:48 PM, updated April 08, 2013 at 6:48 PM

COLUMBUS, Ohio - State Rep. Mike Foley condemned Republican House members on Monday, reacting to news reports that the majority caucus has decided to scuttle Gov. John Kasich's Medicaid expansion plan.

House Speaker William G. Batchelder and other key GOP members are expected on Tuesday afternoon to officially reveal the details of their retooled version of Kasich's "Jobs Budget 2014."

"I am sickened by the news that House Republicans are about to play politics with over 200,000 Ohioans' health and well-being instead of promoting sound and responsible health care policy in our state," Foley, a Cleveland Democrat, said in a statement. "It seems that a small minority of Republicans in the Ohio House are holding strong policy, good sense and common decency hostage, and that is extremely troubling."

Spokesmen for Batchelder and Kasich would not comment on the reports or confirm them.

The Republican governor's proposal would provide coverage to Ohioans making up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare.

House Democrats have praised Kasich's proposal, which could bring nearly \$3 billion in state revenue over seven years and add about 275,000 people to the program. Democrats framed the issue as a test of religious faith and compassion, saying last week, "when it comes particularly to poor people, there is no partisanship."

But conservative Republicans have balked at expanding a government program, and Tea Party activists have threatened primaries against GOP lawmakers who vote for the expansion.

Some Republicans say they fear an expansion could leave the state in the lurch if the federal government doesn't live up to its end of the bargain, which spurred talks of including an opt-out clause in the budget bill. Lawmakers also discussed allowing some to use Medicaid money to purchase individual coverage through insurance exchanges that could be set up for Ohio.

**Rejecting the expansion
would be a "terrible blow...
to our region's economy,
health, families, and ability to
grow jobs."**

-Rev. Gayle Catinella

quoted in Plain Dealer, April 2013



Ohio Gov. John Kasich answers an audience member's question during an appearance at The City Club in Cleveland on Wed., April 3, 2013. (Thomas Ondrey/The Plain Dealer)

Plain Dealer file photo

A background image showing a man in a red shirt on the left, looking towards a woman in a striped shirt on the right. They appear to be standing in front of a brick wall and a glass door. The man is holding a small object, possibly a flyer or a card, and they seem to be in conversation.

Canvassing

“In addition, Greater Cleveland Congregations announced that dozens of volunteers from area religious organizations and neighborhood groups will go door to door in the legislative swing districts of Rocky River, Berea and Solon this week to urge people to contact their legislators.”

-Sarah Jane Tribble, May 20, 2013, Plain Dealer



**Governor Kasich's Press Conference, Cleveland Clinic:
October 2013**

Real people will fall through the cracks if Ohio doesn't expand Medicaid now: Tracey Lind, Jawanza Karriem Colvin and Joshua Caruso

Guest Columnist/cleveland.com's Great Cleveland Congregations Columnist
on October 09, 2013 at 7:02 PM, updated October 09, 2013 at 7:31 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- As congregations in Northeast Ohio. We are proud that we were one of the founders last fall of the coalition in Northeast Ohio that joined with Gov. John Kasich in February to begin to advocate for Medicaid expansion in Ohio.

The governor included expansion in the biennial budget, a courageous step that the business community, provider community and religious community all applauded as the morally right and fiscally responsible thing to do.

Greater Cleveland Congregations has done everything we can do. We have lobbied, written, called and implored the legislature. We have held calls to action in our houses of worship and in our neighborhoods.

Still, our moral and fiscal call is unheeded by the legislature.

The State of Ohio is at a critical juncture. The legislature is back in session. Despite promises of work over the summer, we have heard nothing that indicates to us that expansion is occurring. We are losing hope and patience.

In the meantime, we, as clergy, continue to deal with those the Governor has so accurately described as "the least of these."

Those who would be covered by the expansion include the working poor, our veterans and the disabled. For us, these are not abstract numbers, but real people, such as:

- The 55-year old woman, who lost her job, can't find work and lost her health insurance. She has chronic depression, but can't afford psychiatrist visits or her medication so she stops taking it. This results in a near-lethal suicide attempt and very expensive hospital stay.

"The State of Ohio is at a critical juncture. Despite promises of work over the summer, we have heard nothing that indicates to us that expansion is occurring. We are losing hope and patience."



Over 1,000 members of the Greater Cleveland Congregations who packed Olivet Institutional Baptist Church in Cleveland in January to press for Ohio Medicaid expansion. State lawmakers have yet to vote on the proposal.

Thomas Ondrey, The Plain Dealer

-From Op-Ed by GCC tri-chairs in Plain Dealer, October 9



Signature Gathering: October 2013

Medicaid expansion OK marks a long-awaited victory for supporters, grounds for a fight among critics

Jeremy Pelzer, Northeast Ohio Media Group By Jeremy Pelzer, Northeast Ohio Media Group

on October 21, 2013 at 8:36 PM, updated October 21, 2013 at 11:39 PM

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Depending on who you talk to, Monday's vote by the Ohio Controlling Board to approve \$2.5 billion for Medicaid expansion was either a landmark victory for thousands in need of health care or an unconstitutional and unaffordable ballooning of big government.

Either way, the fight over whether Ohio's new billion-dollar extension of health care will pass through the state's controlling board, either in court or at the polls.

The 5-2 Controlling Board vote marked a culmination of a months-long push, led by Gov. John Kasich, to have the state accept the first chunk of an estimated \$13 billion offered to it for Medicaid expansion under President Obama's Affordable Care Act.

When GOP lawmakers resisted taking the funding, Kasich instead turned to the little-known board to appropriate the money — at least, until legislators draw up a new state budget two years. By accepting the money, 275,000 additional Ohioans will be eligible for Medicaid benefits starting Jan. 1, 2014, according to state estimates. Critics said the expansion plan would cost too much and could lead to cuts in other services. Supporters said the Controlling Board's two-year approval of Medicaid expansion would help thousands in need, while opponents said they plan to challenge the measure in court.

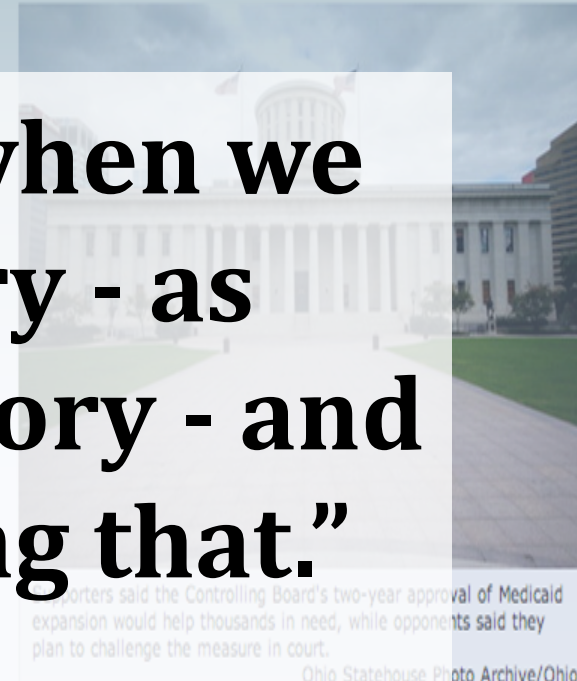
Supporters said the decision to make Ohio the 25th state to accept the federal funding was a signal achievement that, with a single blow, will help to improve the lives of thousands of Ohioans.

-Rob English, quoted in Plain Dealer, Oct 21

"There's moments that we can walk with history -- as citizens, help make history -- and this is one step in doing that," said Rob English, lead organizer of Greater Cleveland Congregations, an interfaith group representing 40 religious and community organizations.

Crucial support for expansion came from the business community, including traditionally GOP-friendly groups such as the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber of Commerce's Keith Lake said in a statement that expansion would help protect employers from the ACA's penalties and could create thousands of jobs, particularly in the health-care industry.



Ohio Statehouse Photo Archive/Ohio Channel

Signed, Sealed, Delivered

“The Ohio Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for Gov. John Kasich’s expansion of Medicaid to an estimated 275,000 poor, uninsured Ohioans. In a 4-3 ruling released late in the afternoon, the court found a legislative panel that oversees government spending acted within state law when it accepted federal aid to fund the expansion.”

-Catherine Candisky, Columbus Dispatch, December 21, 2013

New Year, New Hope

“The start of the new year Wednesday also marks the start of a new era for thousands of Ohioans, many of them the state’s working poor, who up to now have been unable to get health care insurance. Ohio’s expanded Medicaid coverage, with funding support from the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, becomes available Wednesday.”

-Robert Higgs, December 31, Northeast Ohio Media Group