

## Up to the Minute

OACBHA UPDATE

**February 27, 2008**

### **EXPANDED PARITY BILL INTRODUCED IN SENATE**

On Tuesday, Senator Dale Miller introduced Senate Bill 298 to prohibit discrimination in health care policies, contracts, and agreements in the coverage provided for the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses and substance abuse or addiction conditions. S.B. 298 is a companion bill for House Bill 384 which was co-sponsored by Representatives Ted Celeste and Jon Peterson. H.B. 384 and S.B. 298 will expand mental health parity and include alcohol and other drug treatment. The previous parity bill passed in late 2006 was limited to certain biologically based disorders and did not include alcohol and other drug treatment. The complete language of S.B. 298 is available at: [http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=127\\_SB\\_298](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=127_SB_298)

### **PTSD PARITY BILL INTRODUCED IN SENATE**

Earlier this week, Senator Dale Miller introduced Senate Bill 297 which will prohibit health insurers from excluding coverage for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). S.B. 297 is a companion bill for House Bill 294 that was introduced last fall by Representative Ted Celeste. The complete language of S.B. 297 is available at: [http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=127\\_SB\\_297](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=127_SB_297)

### **HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARS TESTIMONY ON HOSPITAL CLOSINGS**

Yesterday, the House Finance and Appropriations Committee heard testimony about Governor Strickland's proposals to fix the \$733 million in the State's budget. Office of Budget and Management Director Pari Sabetty provided testimony about the proposed fixes, including among other issues, details about the Medicaid program and the proposed closing of two state psychiatric hospitals. Several opponents of the hospital closings provided testimony to the committee. Many students from Wright State University told of how closing the Dayton campus of Twin Valley Behavioral Health will adversely affect the training and education of psychiatrists, physicians, nurses, social workers, and others. Montgomery County Commissioner Judy Dodge spoke about the impact the closure will have on the patients, their families, and the citizens of the community who rely on the behavioral health services provided by the hospital. Testimony was provided to the committee about the extended commutes that will now exist in order to transport patients to the alternate state hospitals as well as the difficulties many families will have commuting to visit relatives in the hospitals.

For more information about behavioral health issues in Ohio please visit:

[www.oacbha.org](http://www.oacbha.org)

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