

Up to the Minute

OACBHA UPDATE

January 30, 2008

PSYCHIATRIC DRUG POLICY CHANGE

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has reached a compromise with the administration's decision to require physicians to obtain prior authorization before prescribing psychiatric drugs for Medicaid patients. The revised policy will exempt psychiatrists who are enrolled in managed care plans or working within community mental health centers from obtaining prior authorization. Family practitioners would still need to obtain prior authorization. The administration also agreed to allow mentally ill patients who have been clinically stabilized on a particular drug to have ongoing access to that drug without prior authorization.

FDA REQUIRING SUICIDE STUDIES IN DRUG TRIALS

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is now requiring drug makers to study whether patients become suicidal during clinical trials. The drug industry is being asked for the first time to put a comprehensive suicide assessment into their clinical trials. This new requirement was added after the discovery that antidepressants may cause some children and teenagers to become suicidal. Medicines to treat acne, hypertension, high cholesterol, heartburn, and insomnia can all cause psychiatric problems. To view the article in its entirety please visit: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/24/washington/24fda.html?_r=2&ref=us&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

HEALTH CARE ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

State Representative Jim Raussen (R-Cincinnati) outlined a plan at a crowded press conference this week that was described as being able to offer some level of health care coverage to half of Ohio's approximately 1.2 million uninsured adults over the next several years. The bill, H.B. 456, would subsidize health insurance claims for people with chronic medical conditions and offer tax credits for poor adults who do not qualify for Medicaid. The plan is modeled after the Healthy New York program. Additionally, the bill will offer a BWC premium discount for certain small employers that offer insurance and for employers that incorporate wellness programs, along with several other miscellaneous provisions. To view the bill in its entirety, visit: http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=127_HB_456

ANTHEM LEAVING MEDICAID MANAGED CARE

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is terminating its business with the Ohio Medicaid Covered Families and Children managed care program as of March 31, 2008. The aged, blind and disabled Ohioans covered by Anthem's managed care Medicaid plan are not affected. Those currently under the Covered Families and Children managed care program will have until February 25 to select a new Medicaid managed care plan. If they do not, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will automatically select plans for them. Anthem stated they were dropping out due to insufficient reimbursement rates.

BENEFIT BANK OFFERING TAX RETURN ASSISTANCE

Ohio families earning less than \$54,000 a year may be eligible for free income tax return assistance through the Ohio Benefit Bank. The program, which is offered through a public-private partnership between the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks and more than 400 faith-based, non-profit partners, also helps low and moderate-income Ohioans claim tax credits and other work support benefits. Trained counselors are currently staffing more than 120 Benefit Bank sites throughout the state to help prepare and file free federal and state income tax returns for eligible Ohioans. To learn more visit: <http://gofbci.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=106>

For more information about behavioral health issues in Ohio please visit:
www.oacbha.org

To remove your name from our mailing list or for questions or comments,
please e-mail kthomas@oacbha.org