



Ohio Association of Health Underwriters

Legislative Update

July 1, 2008

Prepared by John T. McGough

The Ohio Legislature conducted its last session day on June 10, 2008 and then went on recess. There is the possibility the Legislature will not be in session until after the November general election. Any work on pending legislation will likely occur during the “lame duck” session in November and December.

During the first six months of this year, OAHU’s major focus has been on Ohio’s efforts to reduce the number of uninsured. The debate has occurred in two major forums. One forum has been through testimony on Representative Jim Raussen’s omnibus health care reform legislation (H.B. 456). OAHU has testified on two occasions in support of certain provisions contained in H.B. 456 which is pending in the House Healthcare Access & Affordability Committee. Our major focus has been in support of the High Risk Pool provisions recently added to the bill.

The other forum has been Governor Ted Strickland’s initiative to insure 500,000 more Ohioans by 2011. OAHU Legislative Chair, Ken Statz, is a member of the Advisory Committee that the Governor created to advise his State Coverage Initiative (SCI) Team on the best way to achieve his goal. It is anticipated that the SCI Team will make their recommendations in the near future. Even though the recommendations will be issued soon, it is unlikely that any substantive health care reform legislation will be seriously dealt with until a new session of the Ohio Legislature convenes next year.

On the election front, it is anticipated that Ohio will again be a very competitive state in the presidential election. Senators McCain and Obama are already running ads and making campaign appearances in the state. At the state level, the Republicans should maintain a strong majority in the Senate (they currently have a 21-12 majority). In the House, Republicans have a 53-46 majority meaning that the Democrats only need to pick up four seats to take control. Both sides will be well-funded, so control of the House should be very close.