

**Ohio Association of Health Underwriters**  
**Legislative Update**  
**March 18, 2009**  
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**Pending Legislation**

**H.B. 1 (Sykes) – Biennial Budget**

On February 12, 2009 Representative Vernon Sykes (D-Akron) introduced Governor Strickland's biennial budget proposal. Budget hearings were postponed last month to give the Administration time to review the recently enacted federal stimulus legislation. The actual language of H.B. 1 did not become available until early March, and then the House Finance & Appropriations Committee heard an overview of the budget from OBM Director Pari Sabety. During the past few weeks subcommittees of the House Finance Committee have been conducting hearings on the various subjects in the bill.

**H.B. 8 (Celeste/Garland) – Autism Coverage**

Representatives Ted Celeste (D-Grandview Heights) and Nancy Garland (D-New Albany) introduced H.B. 8 to prohibit health insurers from excluding coverage for specified services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. This legislation is one of the priority bills for the House Democrat Caucus. The bill received sponsor testimony the House Healthcare Access & Affordability Committee on March 11<sup>th</sup> and proponent and opponent testimony on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**H.B. 51 (Miller) – Breast Cancer**

Representative Eugene Miller (D-Cleveland) introduced H.B. 51 on February 26, 2009 to create the Triple Negative Breast Cancer Commission. The commission would promote the study of this cancer which is defined as “the subtype of breast cancer characterized by cells that lack receptors for the hormones estrogen and progesterone and the protein receptor known as the human epidermal growth factor receptor2, or HER2, and therefore cannot be treated with breast cancer drugs that target these receptors, including such drugs as tamoxifen and trastuzumab”. The bill has been referred to the House Health Committee.

**H.B. 56 (Miler) – Colorectal Cancer Screenings**

On March 3, 2009 Representative Eugene Miller (D-Cleveland) introduced H.B. 56 to require health insurers to provide benefits for colorectal exams and laboratory tests for cancer in accordance with the most recent published guidelines of the American Cancer Society. The bill received sponsor testimony in the House Insurance Committee on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**S.B. 15 (D. Miller) – Enhanced Mental Health Parity**

On February 10, 2009 Senator Dale Miller (D-Cleveland) introduced S.B. 15, the “enhanced mental health parity” legislation that mandates coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of all mental illnesses and substance abuse and drug addictions. It has been referred to the Senate Health, Human Services & Aging Committee.

**S.B. 25 (Schaffer) – Deductibility of Medical Expenses**

On February 10, 2009 Senator Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster) introduced S.B. 25 to authorize the deduction of unreimbursed medical expenses to the extent the expenses exceed 1% of federal adjusted gross income. The current standard is unreimbursed expenses that exceed 7.5%. The bill received sponsor testimony in the Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development Committee on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

**S.B. 34 (D. Miller) – Group Health Insurance**

Senator Dale Miller (D-Cleveland) introduced S.B. 34 on February 10, 2009 to require the Ohio Department of Administrative Services to create a health insurance program that allows municipalities, small employers and nonprofit corporations or associations to purchase for their employees the same policies provided to state employees. The bill has been referred to the Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor Committee.

**S.B. 64 – (Coughlin) - Colorectal Cancer Screenings**

Senator Kevin Coughlin (R-Cuyahoga Falls) introduced S. B. 64 on March 4, 2009 to require health insurers to cover colorectal cancer screenings. The bill, which is the same as S.B. 278 which passed the Senate last session, specifies the specific colorectal cancer screenings which insurers must cover. The bill has been referred to the Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor Committee.

**S.J.R. 2 (Coughlin) – Health Care Resolution**

On February 24, 2009 Senator Kevin Coughlin (R-Cuyahoga Falls) introduced Senate Joint Resolution 2 to enact Section 43 of Article II of the Ohio Constitution. It reads as follows:

“The people have the right to enter into private contracts with health care providers for health care services and to purchase private health care coverage. The General Assembly may not require any person to participate in any health care system or plan, nor may it impose a penalty or fine, of any type, for choosing to obtain or decline health care coverage or for participation in any particular health care system or plan.”

The resolution has been referred the Senate Insurance, Commerce & Labor Committee.