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Find the report at: www.policymattersohio.org/PublicBenefits2008.htm

Public Benefits Subsidize Major Ohio Employers

The state of Ohio paid an estimated \$111.5 million in 2007 to cover Medicaid costs for workers and their dependents at the 50 Ohio employers that appeared most frequently in data collected by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Altogether, 111,046 participants in family and children's Medicaid worked at these employers or were family members of workers.

The total approximate cost to Ohio of workers and their dependents using Medicaid at employers for whom a four-year comparison was possible increased 29 percent, to \$107.6 million last year from \$83.4 million in 2004, in inflation adjusted 2007 dollars.

Enrollment in Medicaid and food stamp programs continued to grow at these employers between 2004 and 2007, increasing by 14.6 percent and 16.8 percent, respectively, over that time. Employee and dependent participation in cash assistance declined 21.6 percent during the same period.

The three employers with the most workers enrolled in Medicaid on average in Ohio were Wal-Mart, McDonald's, and Yum! Brands, which owns Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell.

Those were among the findings from data provided this month to Policy Matters Ohio by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The data identify the number of employees and their family members who received public benefits – Medicaid Coverage for Families and Children, food stamps and Ohio Works First cash assistance – while working at the employers in Ohio that appeared most frequently in the agency's data. Recipients in each of these programs qualify because they earn less than established income guidelines.

Most of the listed employers were retailers, restaurants or staffing/personnel firms.

Wal-Mart had the most employees and their dependents – 13,141 – enrolled in Medicaid last year. Despite changes in the company's health plans, the share of Ohio Wal-Mart workers enrolled in



Medicaid has remained the same since 2005 at roughly 7 percent. McDonald's and its franchisees had the most Ohio workers and their dependents receiving food stamps and cash assistance in 2007. The number of employees and their dependents receiving Medicaid jumped most sharply over the four-year period at the Akron-based telemarketer Infocision, the retailer Target and the Cleveland Clinic Health System. These employers each saw an increase of more than 40 percent from 2004 to 2007.

“It’s important that low-income people – employed and unemployed alike – get assistance in meeting their basic needs, but we want to understand which employers rely on the public sector to assist with basic compensation for their workforce,” said Piet van Lier, report author and senior researcher at Policy Matters.

This analysis by Policy Matters Ohio covers 2006 and 2007 data released this month and similar data for 2004 and 2005 released two years ago. (For the earlier report, go to www.policymattersohio.org/public_benefits_2006_03.htm)

