



For immediate release
January 28, 2013

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policymattersohio.org/Medicaid-jan2013

Ohio could access more than \$50 million in federal funds

Expanding options for seniors and those with disabilities to live at home could bring federal money, improve lives, create jobs

Ohio could receive more than \$58 million in federal funds, improve the lives of senior citizens and Ohioans with disabilities, and create community-based health care jobs by taking advantage of two new Medicaid financing options available to states under the Affordable Care Act. A new report from Policy Matters Ohio describes these options and makes recommendations that would improve health care and bring resources to the state.

The Balancing Incentives Payment Program (BIPP) and the Community First Choice Option (CFCO), new programs authorized under the Affordable Care Act, offer significant incentive financing to help states provide long-term care in homes instead of nursing homes.

“The state is already improving services and controlling costs by reducing complexity, and creating a managed care pilot,” said Wendy Patton, report author and senior project director at Policy Matters. “But more can be done to help people in their homes, bring additional federal dollars to underwrite these services, and create jobs in the community.” Medicaid has favored more expensive institutional care over home and community-based services; more than half of Ohio patients are in institutions.

Shifting to home care leads to long-term cost savings. BIPP boosts federal matching funds for home and community-based services by two percentage points. Ohio has already authorized application for this program, with stakeholders anticipating the new federal funds. The program only runs through 2015, so the upcoming budget presents a good opportunity to take advantage of the time left.

CFCO would permanently boost the federal Medicaid match by six percentage points for home-based personal attendant services for Medicaid-eligible patients in need of institutional care. In the first two years, California expects \$573 million in federal funds; New York expects \$90 million in the first year. At least seven other states are moving to apply. “We know from our work with tens of thousands of seniors last year that people want to stay in their homes. This program strengthens home care, creates jobs and saves Ohio money,” said Executive Director of the Ohio Organizing Collaborative Kirk Noden. “Ohio can't afford to leave money on the table while other states move ahead.”

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Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus. The Ohio Organizing Collaborative brings together diverse faith based, community, and labor organizations to bring about social change and racial and economic equity in Ohio, www.ohorganizing.org.