

Recommended Priorities as Ohio Moves to a Unified Budget for Long-Term Services and Supports.

Ohio is developing a unified approach to funding long-term services and supports at a very challenging time. Specific challenges include –

- Ohio's sluggish economy which has created an environment where we anticipate that new revenues to support the changes proposed by the workgroup will not be available and change will need to be accomplished through a redistribution of existing resources.
- Ohio's existing information technology systems are currently fragmented and supported by different agencies. Ultimately, the degree to which budgets can be consolidated depends in large measure on the degree to which IT systems can be consolidated.
- Ohio's current fragmented system of long-term services and supports provision developed over a period of 40 years; it is unrealistic to think that in a single biennium services can be reorganized to end this fragmentation.

On the other hand, the unified budget process has confirmed the need for Ohio to create a vision for how long-term services and supports will be delivered to its citizens in the future. This is especially critical given that 12,000 Ohioans each month turn age 60 and that in 2050, more than 1 million Ohioans will be age 85 or older. As one stakeholder puts it: "These last few months have been the first time that Ohio has brought disparate stakeholders together in attempt to create a common vision for long-term care in Ohio."

The unified long-term care budget workgroup has approved literally hundreds of recommendations from five subcommittees created to assist the workgroup in meeting its charge from the General Assembly. We recognize that given this volume, it is essential to focus on a few priority recommendations as we move forward. At the same time, a more detailed project plan will be created and responsibility assigned to specific entities for each of the adopted recommendations so no one need fear that a particular recommendation will be lost in the process or sheer volume of the ongoing work.

We recommend that initial implementation of Ohio's unified budget strategy be spread across the current biennium and the next two biennia and tied to a specific budget strategy.

Priorities for the near or short term: SFY 2009 (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009)

Priorities have been chosen for SFY 2009 with the understanding that implementation of these recommendations must be budget neutral.

- Decision on financing and service delivery structures (e.g. Medicaid waivers, state plan options, etc.) Phase 1, 2, and 3..

- Through implementation of Home Choice (MFP) strategies, working with current nursing facility residents to offer them opportunities to return to community-based settings. Additional work will address and close loopholes that allow inappropriate placements. (Phase 1, 2, and 3).
- Information and assistance tools for consumers at the “front door” are established. (all phases)
- Interagency expenditure and caseload process established (Phase 1, 2, and 3).
- Implementation of State Profile Tool (all phases).
- Finalize work on phases 2, 3 and 4 for the Unified Budget.

Intermediate-term priorities – SFY 2010/2011 (July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011)

Some of these priorities will have cost implications which will need to be “scored” during the development of the budget (and due September 15, 2008).

- Budget structure is modified to create a single long-term services and supports funding line in the budgets of ODJFS, ODA, ODMRDD, ODMH and ODADAS. Phases 1, 2, and 3.
- Allowing “Home First” enrollments into programs and services that have waiting lists currently (i.e., current nursing home residents bypass waiting lists). Phases 1, 2, and 3.
- Care management is extended to all consumers with need for long-term services and supports. Phase 1.
- Each Ohio long-term services and supports program has developed consumer-directed options which consumers may choose. All Phases.
- Ohio’s Long-Term Care Consumer Guide expanded to provide information on long-term services and supports beyond nursing facilities and assisted living facilities. All phases.

Long-term priorities – SFY 2012/2013 (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2013)

As is true for the intermediate-term priorities, some of these priorities will have cost implications which will need to be “scored” during the development of the budget (and due September 2010).

- Ohio employs a single unified IT system to support all state agencies and their local partners in carrying out their responsibilities to provide long-term services and supports. All phases.

- One single line in the ODJFS budget is created to unify all spending on long-term services and supports. Phase 1
- Additional housing and supportive services options finalized for Ohio (note that the planning for these is a short and intermediate-term activity). All phases.
- Incentives in place to encourage facilities to adapt to the new service delivery system (including implementation of a new Certificate of Need policy for nursing facilities). Phase 1.

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