



Physicians Action Network Opposes Ohio's 1115 Waiver

As physicians across Ohio who represent a variety of practitioners, including pediatricians, radiologists, gynecologists, cardiologists, psychiatrists and researchers who serve thousands of Ohioans every day - including those who rely on Medicaid for health care - the health of our patients is our first priority. They need access to consistent, affordable and quality health care, which is impossible for many without adequate insurance.

That is why the Physicians Action Network opposes the Ohio Department of Medicaid's 1115 Waiver application, which threatens coverage for over 300,000 Ohioans with no evidence that such restrictions will encourage people to work. Despite their claim that one of their goals is "improving health outcomes," their logic is backwards. People must be healthy in order to work, and healthier people are more likely to get jobs.

These new restrictions will harm vulnerable groups, including those wrestling with substance abuse, seasonal workers, workers with irregular schedules, and people in low-income jobs. The fact that exemptions seem designed to protect white individuals and communities from losing their coverage, while Ohioans of color will disproportionately be required to meet these new rules, is cause for serious concern.

Instituting work requirements has failed with other programs. The consequences of imposing new restrictions on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was not to move people into jobs, but instead uncompassionately cut over 350,000 from the program. These new rules will almost certainly have similar consequences, taking away affordable health care coverage from hundreds of thousands of Ohioans without encouraging employment.

The goal of Medicaid should be to provide health care coverage to those who need it most, recognizing that health care is uniquely valuable to the strength of our families, communities, and economies. Ohioans drastically oppose these new restrictions - over 94 percent of the comments to the Department were in opposition to the original proposal, yet no significant changes were made.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services should follow the lead of Ohioans, and reject the 1115 waiver.

- The Physicians Action Network