

Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse
August 17, 2018

Political News and Notes

Dialysis Issue Taken Off Ballot

A 7-0 decision released on Monday by the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that the Kidney Dialysis Patient Protection Amendment will not be included on the November ballot. The court ruled that the submitted petitions were invalid due to circulators failing to file proper forms before collecting voter signatures. The ballot measure focused on regulatory requirements for dialysis facilities and would have introduced an amendment to the state constitution that limits the amount that dialysis centers would be able to charge per cost of service.

Department of Medicaid Terminates Contracts

The Ohio Department of Medicaid terminated contracts with middlemen, also known as pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), earlier this week following a report released by State Auditor Dave Yost. The middlemen used a “spread” pricing model that estimated the difference between the amount billed to managed care plans and the amount paid to the pharmacies at more than \$223.7 million in the past year. The report released by Auditor Yost determined this difference to be 31 percent more charged to Ohio Medicaid than the amount paid to pharmacists for generic prescriptions. State Medicaid Director Barbara Sears has indicated that the department will be adopting a “pass-through” funding model to increase transparency and cut costs. The department hopes to implement this new model by early January of next year.

New Candidates for Ohio House

Several Ohio House Districts have recently been solidifying candidates for the upcoming election in November. In the 15th House District (Cuyahoga County, Parma area), both the Democrat and Republican candidates have been slated to determine who will succeed outgoing Representative Nick Celebrezze. In the 3rd House District (Wood County, Bowling Green area), Democrat Aidan Hubbell-Staeble will face incumbent Republican Representative Theresa Gavarone. A new challenger to House Speaker Ryan Smith has entered the race in the 93rd House District (Jackson County, southern Ohio). Democrat Samantha Thomas-Bush, a medical malpractice/healthcare attorney, will challenge Smith.

Budget Office Revises Tax Revenue Estimates

Analysts at the Ohio Office of Budget and Management are predicting \$531 million more in tax collections through June 2019 than the biennium budget previously forecasted. Budget officials released revisions of the state’s financial status that outlined changes in performances of various tax categories as well as overall increased revenue in the 2019 Fiscal Year. They predicted that the upcoming year would see consistent economic growth, although non-tax revenue such as cash transfers may decrease. Governor Kasich has proposed adjusting personal income tax withholdings and building up the Budget Stabilization Fund, or “rainy day” fund, given the positive financial impact of these revisions.

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