

Monthly Status Report

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For Period Ending: Aug. 31, 2017

Description: The following is a high-level overview of the major initiatives the department has underway, along with other newsworthy items. These are in addition to the day-to-day business of maintaining the operational effectiveness of HCJFS. The goal of the report is to provide the reader with an understanding of work that is underway and any significant issues that require discussion or decisions on the part of executive management.

- Ohio's new budget eliminates the Disability Financial Assistance (DFA) program on December 31, 2017. There will be several phases to the elimination of the program over the next few months, but the bottom line is current recipients and those waiting for approval will be notified that the program is ending and they will no longer receive benefits. This could cause calls to the BOCC. This is a state decision. As part of the elimination of DFA, the state is creating a program that will refer adult Medicaid recipients to employment readiness or vocational rehab services and assist recipients with disabling health conditions in applying for SSI/SSDI benefits.
- Hamilton County recently received a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program award for having the highest timeliness rate in 2016 – better than all the other metropolitan counties in the state. The timeliness rate is the percentage of food assistance cases authorized within 30 days for normal processing, or within seven days, if the applicant qualifies for expedited food assistance. The HCJFS rate for fiscal year 2016 was 96 percent.
- Monthly allotments for food assistance are dropping. A new Chart of Allowances has been issued and will take effect Oct. 1. Recipients may contact county commissioners if they notice a reduction in their benefits. This is not a local decision. The reduction is something occurring at the federal level.
- The Public Children Service Association of Ohio worked with Casey Family Programs to host an Aug. 21 roundtable for state and federal politicians to learn how the opiate epidemic is impacting the child welfare program. I was happy to help educate legislators about this significant problem. We discussed the need for Protect Ohio flexible funding to continue in order to serve the growing number of children coming into care. We also discussed the need for Medicaid reimbursement when in-home services are provided. The state's funding for child welfare was also a hot topic.
- HCJFS will lose approximately \$1.8 million in federal allocations this year. The agency will adjust to the lower allocation, but it is important to note the reduction, as it may be the start of a federal trend.
- Our Higher Education Mentoring Initiative was very fortunate to receive a \$12,000 donation for scholarships from AT&T. AT&T has been a supporter for several years and we expect to put that money to good use helping meet the academic needs of our foster children.
- Child Support Awareness Month featured license amnesty for delinquent parents who re-engaged in the system and started making regular payments. In the first half of the month, we received 1,566 payments, which is 475 more than received in the first half of Aug. 2016, when amnesty was also offered. It is very important to reestablish that income stream to ensure children's needs are met.