

## Ohio Issue 2 and medical marijuana HPIO online resources inform voters, policymakers

On Nov. 7, 2017, Ohioans will vote on Issue 2 – a ballot initiative that would require state agencies and programs to purchase prescription drugs at prices no higher than what the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs pays for the same medication.

Since voters are policymakers in the case of a ballot initiative, HPIO created an Issue 2 resource page to educate voters by making information on the issue easily accessible.

The resource page includes:

- Background on the proposed statute
- Links to newspaper endorsements and media coverage
- Research and resources on policy options for addressing drug pricing

HPIO also has created a resource page to provide resources to policymakers and others on medical marijuana in Ohio.

In November 2015, Ohio voters rejected a ballot initiative that would have amended the Ohio State Constitution to legalize medical and recreational marijuana use. Although the ballot issue did not pass, discussions of the ballot issue revealed strong public interest in changing marijuana policy in Ohio. In response, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 523 (HB 523), which became effective on Sept. 8, 2016, legalizing medical marijuana in the state.

As Ohio's new medical marijuana program is rolled out and fully implemented, there will likely be opportunities for policymakers to consider additional policy changes to revise or improve current marijuana policy. The information and resources on the HPIO page are intended to help policymakers and other interested stakeholders understand the current state of the law in Ohio and at the federal level, and the ongoing policy and health implications of the legalization of medical marijuana.



*Advisory group members convene in August at the Mid-Ohio Foodbank in Grove City.*

## HPIO work continues on social determinants of infant mortality

Over the past four months, HPIO has convened an advisory group of nearly 100 stakeholders to seek content expertise, feedback on preliminary findings and recommendations for policy changes to improve the social, economic and physical environments that impact maternal and infant health in Ohio.

Earlier this year, the Legislative Service Commission (LSC) contracted with HPIO to study the social determinants of health and infant mortality. HPIO will submit a final report to LSC by Dec. 1, 2017.

The final report will include a series of specific, actionable policy recommendations, as well as research on states that have had large improvements in infant

mortality rates, an analysis of relevant data from the HPIO *Health Value Dashboard*, a literature review and environmental scan and an inventory of evidence-informed strategies to address the social determinants of health.

In June, HPIO was invited to present on the project to the Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality (OCPIM).

Senate Bill 332 (sponsored by former Senator Jones and Senator Tavares), which was enacted by the Ohio General Assembly in late 2016 and signed by Gov. Kasich in early 2017, required LSC to contract with a nonprofit entity to study and make recommendations related to the social determinants of infant mortality.

# HPIO exploring health impact of income, education

Recent HPIO work has highlighted how income and education impact health.

In September, HPIO released its latest publication, "Connections between Income and Health."

More than a century of research has found strong connections between income and health. As a group, people with higher incomes live longer and experience better mental and physical health outcomes. Understanding how income influences health can inform policies, programs and resource allocation to improve both the health and economic well-being of Ohioans.

The HPIO brief provides an overview of the relationship between income and health, describes the various factors that impact income and health and outlines relevant policy implications.

The release was preceded by a forum hosted by HPIO in July titled "Linking Health and Wealth: How Economic Vitality Can Lead to Healthier Ohioans."

In July, HPIO also released the second in its series of four policy briefs exploring the connection between health

and education. "Connections between Education and Health No. 2: Health Services in Schools" focuses on how Ohio schools are providing health services to students and specific evidence-based policies and programs that have demonstrated both health and education benefits.

HPIO released its first policy brief in the series, Connections between Education and Health, in January. The third brief, exploring early learning policies and programs, is to be released in October. The final brief in the series will examine school-based prevention policies and programs that impact health and education outcomes.

HPIO's work in analyzing the link between education and health led to an invitation to present to the legislative Task Force on Education and Poverty, a panel created by the Ohio Speaker of the House to recommend policies to close a persistent achievement gap involving students in poverty.

Additional resources can be found on HPIO's Intersections between Education and Health online resource page, which will be continually updated throughout 2017.

## Thank you to our funders

The following core funders are advancing the health of Ohioans through informed policy decisions:

- Interact for Health
- Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation
- The George Gund Foundation
- Saint Luke's Foundation of Cleveland
- The Cleveland Foundation
- HealthPath Foundation of Ohio
- Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton
- Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland
- Cardinal Health Foundation
- United Way of Greater Cincinnati
- Mercy Health
- CareSource Foundation
- SC Ministry Foundation
- United Way of Central Ohio

## Upcoming HPIO Forum

### Politics, perceptions and the role of evidence in policymaking

Given the exceptionally partisan political climate and skepticism of information that doesn't adhere to particular points of view, it is difficult for policymakers and others to evaluate the evidence needed to implement effective health policy. And with the new administration signaling that states will have greater opportunity to take the lead on policy decisions, it is even more critical that state leaders have access to reliable data and analysis.

This forum will explore the importance of evidence-based decision making, particularly at the state level, and how policymakers and others can determine the credibility of information and overcome opposition to evidence that challenges preconceived partisan ideology.

#### Featured Speakers

- **Ron Haskins, Co-Chair**, Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking & Brookings Institution
- **Jennifer Haberkorn**, Politico
- **Aaron Sharockman**, PolitiFact
- Plus a panel discussion on building trust and communicating evidence

**When:** 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
**Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2017**

**Where:** Sheraton Columbus Hotel at  
Capitol Square  
75 E State Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

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