

**Ohio Advocates for Health Care Access
Gubernatorial Candidate Forum
Meeting Notes – August 16, 2006**

Comments and Questions for Ohioans for Blackwell:

- 1.) Insurance coverage for newly diagnosed patients; improve health care access programs for treatment – right now in Ohio 1,000 women with breast cancer go untreated each year
 - National Breast Cancer Coalition
- 2.) Leadership that supports the passage of mental health parity issues
 - Ohio Psychological Association
- 3.) Prescription drug access, mental health drug availability; solutions for income threshold issues; making discount even deeper on prescription discount card programs for the uninsured and underinsured
 - Access to Benefits Coalition (ABC)
- 4.) Issue of caregivers who are forced to quit work to provide care & thus have no coverage themselves
 - Department on Aging
- 5.) Diabetes Cost Reduction Act (DCRA): 46 states have passed this & Ohio is that last “industrialized” state to not do so; coverage & insurance issues with Diabetes; focus on prevention and education are key to saving money later
 - Diabetes Association
- 6.) Brain illness issues & need for the realization that treatment works
 - Psychiatric Association
- 7.) Access to health care; the elimination of Disability Assistance caused many problems; behavioral health Medicaid issues; pharmacy access especially concerning mental health issues; behavioral health is separate from physical health within Medicaid system and behavioral health has not received a budget increase in past eight years
 - Mental Health Advocacy Coalition
- 8.) Restoration of disability programs; expansion of Medicaid program; health care access; desire to increase eligibility up to 200% of federal poverty level for Medicaid
 - Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks

- 9.) Concern over cost of higher education; making college more affordable - many new doctors are not able to practice medicine because of large loans, etc.; very concerned about & against TEL/TABOR
 - Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
- 10.) Establishment of an “Office of Adult Vision” in state government health department; education of prevention
 - Prevent Blindness Ohio
- 11.) Indoor & outdoor air quality policy issues
 - Lung Association
- 12.) Implementation of collaborative health care models ; focusing on prevention and treatment in early stages of chronic diseases; importance of research and development and creating a positive environment for success without barriers to R&D efforts
 - GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals
- 13.) Creative, innovative governor that will implement new ways to get quality care and access to those insurance companies deem “uninsurable”
 - Access to Benefits Coalition
- 14.) Medicaid reimbursement rates is a real issue with physicians; it costs doctors to treat these patients because rates are so low
 - Ohio Academy of Family Physicians

SECRETARY BLACKWELL’S HEALTH CARE STANCE:

- “Basket of choice”
 - Healthcare platform is being developed and will be announced by the end of August 2006
 - Focus should be on consumers and health care providers, so consumer and care provider-driven – where patients can select from a “basket of choices” what is best for them and their individual situation
- 5 Pillars of Blackwell Platform:
 - Reform of Tax Code
 - Reform of Education System (including accessibility to higher education)
 - Reform of Health Care System
 - Reform of the Litigation System
 - Reform of Regulatory Environment

Notes from Congressman Strickland's Address to OAHCA:

- Supports universal health care coverage and believes we have that system today – there is no free health care today, someone always pays for it – whether it be in a chaotic or organized way
- Wants equality in health care regardless of economic stability
- Health care is a medical, social, political *and* moral issue
- Will **not** attempt to control cost by cutting care to those on Medicaid
- Will **not** attempt to save money by reducing reimbursements to physicians
- Will subsidize premiums
- Will fight for mental health parity
- Will focus on the 1 million (+) uninsured Ohioans
- Will support a “free market clearinghouse for purchasing coverage”
- Will support and expand Medicaid benefits so that patients receiving disability will continue to get benefits once they return to work
- Supports “NextGen Network” with dedicated virtual space to health care information technology including electronic medical records
- Will focus on preventative care, especially with regards to chronic disease such as Diabetes
- Will support primary care physicians & will do what he can to make it easier for them to provide care to “high risk patients”
- Supports biomedical research
- Strongly supports stem cell research

THE BENEFIT BANK

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt (Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks)

- This is a free service that helps people access public assistance programs
- The Benefit Bank (TBB) is an online tool that connects communities and their residents to available resources.
 - TBB provides access to tax credits, public benefits for low and moderate income families – including tax credit, food stamps, medical benefits, children's health insurance, energy assistance
- More than \$1 billion of public funds goes unclaimed / untouched each year in Ohio
- TBB helps people to access public programs by breaking down some barriers that exist in current systems; streamlines the application process; provides people with one-on-one assistance and help in enrolling/applying for programs in which they're eligible
- The Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (with the help of AmeriCORP Vista) is lead agency in Ohio for TBB
- If you're interested in learning more about the TBB and helping to establish a benefit bank location in your area or are interested in trainings, please contact Lisa at 614.221.4336.

Groups attending the August 16, 2006 OAHCA meeting:

American Diabetes Association, volunteers, patients and advocates
Lung Association
Northern Ohio Breast Cancer Coalition Fund
Ohio Psychological Association
Access to Benefits Coalition
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
Ohio Dept. of Mental Health
Union County Council on Aging
VISTA volunteers
Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging
Prevent Blindness Ohio
National Alliance for Mentally Ill Ohio
Columbus Health Department
Multiple Sclerosis Society
Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks
Omeris
TAP Pharmaceuticals
GSK Pharmaceuticals
Ohio Psychiatric Association
Ohio State Medical Association
AARP
Ohio Association of Medical Equipment Services
Stark County Prescription Network