

Meeting summary for OHCA Assisted living member call (05/28/2025)

Quick recap

The meeting focused on the status of the state budget bill and its potential impact on assisted living services, including funding issues and proposed changes to Medicaid waivers and eligibility requirements. Concerns were raised about the long-term care navigator, the Never Alone Act, and the MyCare Ohio rollout, as well as the implications of federal legislation on Ohio's Medicaid budget. Additional topics discussed included certification scholarships, convention certificates, and staffing updates for OHCA.

Next steps

- [Assisted living providers to provide the "Never Alone" fact sheet to new and existing residents as required by the Never Alone Act.](#)
- [Assisted living providers in the existing 29 Mycare Ohio counties to contact and establish contracts with the four health plans \(CareSource, Buckeye, Molina, and Anthem\) before January 1, 2026.](#)
- [Assisted living providers to check their county's rollout date for Mycare Ohio Next Generation and prepare for managed care billing accordingly.](#)
- [Assisted living providers to consult with their county offices regarding how to handle Social Security back payments for Medicaid-eligible residents.](#)
- [OHCA members to apply for OHCA certification scholarships between June 2nd and June 16th.](#)
- [Convention attendees to download their CE certificates from the OHCA convention website starting June 2nd.](#)
- [OHCA team to follow up with Director McElroy regarding concerns about the Long-Term Care Navigator and provider survey.](#)

Summary

State Budget Bill Senate Review

The meeting focused on the status of the state budget bill, which was initially discussed in the House and is now under review in the Senate. Pete Van Runkle reported that while Senate committees have been holding hearings, there is no substitute bill available yet, despite earlier expectations. The Senate is still working through various issues and plans to release their version next week, though the reasons for the delay remain unclear.

Assisted Living Budget Challenges

The group discussed budget and funding issues for assisted living services, with Pete explaining that while they had initially hoped for rate increases, they now expect budget neutrality and are considering either a rate review or a 2% increase coupled with bed-hold payments. Pete also revealed that the Administration's

proposed increase in the Personal Needs Allowance from \$50 to \$100, which was reduced to \$75 by the House, does not include funding for assisted living residents, despite earlier representations. Debbie mentioned upcoming Federal legislation that could impact Medicaid funding and waiver rates, noting that while some proposed reductions did not make it into the final bill, there are still concerns about potential reductions that could affect all Medicaid services, including assisted living.

Federal Medicaid Funding Impact Analysis

Debbie explained the implications of the Federal Reconciliation Bill on Ohio's Medicaid budget, particularly regarding provider taxes and the expansion population. She noted that while the bill did not include a reduction in the Medicaid matching rate, it did cap increases in provider taxes, which could affect funding for various Medicaid services including assisted living. Debbie also highlighted concerns about a proposed CMS rule that would eliminate waivers for non-uniform provider taxes, which could impact Ohio's managed care tax funding of approximately \$2.5 billion annually.

Medicaid Waivers and Eligibility Changes

Debbie discussed concerns about potential changes to Medicaid waivers and eligibility requirements in the federal budget reconciliation bill. She explained that Ohio's Medicaid program could be affected by proposed grandfathering restrictions and a reduction in the Medicaid eligibility look-back period from three months to one month. Debbie noted that the bill is moving from the House to the Senate, where there is uncertainty about the extent of proposed changes, and she mentioned that Pete and Erin will conduct hill visits in Washington D.C. to advocate for Ohio's Medicaid program.

Long-Term Care Navigator Review Needed

Pete discussed concerns about the long-term care navigator, including issues with the provider survey and the quiz that may steer users toward skilled nursing facilities instead of assisted living. He emphasized that these tools were developed without stakeholder input and requested a review of the survey and quiz. Pete also noted that the satisfaction survey changes promised by the Ombudsman's office for June have not been communicated or shared for feedback, and he will continue to push for these discussions.

MyCare Ohio Expansion and Advocacy

Pete explained the Never Alone Act, which allows residents in congregate care settings to appoint an advocate, and discussed the fact sheet requirement from the Department of Health. Erin provided an update on the MyCare Ohio rollout, which will expand to include all four plans (Care Source, Buckeye, Melina, and Anthem) in 29 counties starting January 1, 2026, and discussed the need for residents to choose new plans if they are currently with United Healthcare or Better Health of Ohio. Erin also addressed the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023, which eliminated the windfall elimination penalty, resulting in retroactive adjustments to patient liability, and advised facilities to consult with counties regarding the handling of these back payments to maintain Medicaid eligibility.

Certification Scholarships and Staff Updates

Erin announced that certification scholarships will open on June 2nd for a two-week period, covering up to \$1,500 of certification costs, with popular uses including SEAL and Activity Director certifications. She also discussed convention certificates, noting that they can be downloaded from the convention website using registration information, and directed questions about certificates to Kathy Chapman. Pete announced that Tammy Cassidy will join OHCA as a full-time employee next week, focusing on regulatory issues for skilled nursing and assisted living members, following her previous role as a consultant and contract worker. Kristin raised a question about navigator referrals for assisted living, which Pete clarified was discussed with Leilani, the Long Term Care Ombudsman, during an assisted living Wednesday call, but no further action has been taken since then.

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