

OHIO HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

**September 13, 2021, 1:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting**

M I N U T E S

Chair John Goodman called the meeting to order. The table at the end of these minutes shows attendance.

The Chair pointed out the OHCA Antitrust Compliance, Conflict of Interest, and Confidentiality Policies in the online material. He emphasized the need to comply with the policies.

Motion: To adopt the minutes of the previous meeting.
Seconded; motion carried.

Pete Van Runkle updated the committee on the proposed CMS vaccine mandate. The previous week, President Biden expanded the mandate to cover additional health care providers. The exact scope likely would not be known until the rule was published. It also was not clear what exceptions to the mandate the rule might allow and when it would take effect. The rule was expected sometime in October. Debbie Jenkins added that her contact at CMS said discussion was ongoing about whether to include providers not listed in the press release.

Chair Goodman asked if CMS would keep the oversight role. Mark Schlater commented that the mandate would make a short-staffed situation even worse and deaths would result. You just can't force people to take the vaccine. Tom Rickels referred to an article saying the religious exemption could be interpreted to include any firmly held beliefs. Chair Goodman said that was true for employer mandates, but the question was what CMS would require to prove a religious exemption. Rob Pivonka agreed that the EEOC took an expansive view, but an employer could ask questions about the employee's beliefs. It was unknown what CMS would say. He suggested that there could be an undue hardship argument. Jeremy Monroe gave examples of employees his company already lost because of the PPE and testing requirements.

Mr. Van Runkle reported on HB 248, which would prohibit employers and governmental entities from establishing vaccination mandates. This legislation would conflict with the federal mandate. The House stopped hearings on the bill and members were considering amendments. There could be a non-whipped vote in the House. Ohio business organizations remained firmly opposed.

The staffing ballot issue targeting SNFs was approved for signature collection, but the earliest it could be on the ballot was November 2022. As of the time of the meeting, the proponents apparently had not hired professional signature collectors. OHCA engaged a law firm to monitor the situation and to help prepare for the possibility the measure could get on the ballot.

SB 6, which allowed temporary nurse aides to take the state test if they provided documentation of training, was scheduled to take effect September 30. ODH still had not provided guidance on the process, but OHCA expected it to involve submitting the documentation to the testing center. The CMS waiver allowing TNAs was still in effect, with no set expiration date, so centers still could hire TNAs. The Public Health Emergency probably would be extended until at least December 31, 2021, but the waiver could end before that.

Mr. Van Runkle explained that OHCA was working with Head Start groups to inform members about the workforce aspect: people using Head Start for child care would not lose that benefit if they took a job until the child aged out of the program. OHCA would send out a bulletin on this opportunity with information about local contacts. A webinar was scheduled for October 7.

The committee discussed the DSP Ohio and Care for the Aging websites. Members were to review the sites and to comment on whether they should be changed or dropped. Ms. Jenkins said DSP Ohio was different than C4A because it was a joint effort among various organizations. Mr. Rickels and Brandi Body pointed out problems with DSP Ohio, both content of the site and lack of promotion. Bottom line was it did not produce results. Carol Slight, Karen Knavel, and Mr. Schlater all agreed with that conclusion.

Turning to C4A, Melanie Rittenour said she had seen only one applicant from it. Mr. Monroe said the idea was to put out positive messages about working in the industry. He commented on radio ads saying CDC recommended not visiting SNFs and ALs. Mandy Smith reported that she saw about one applicant submission a week.

Mr. Van Runkle gave quick updates on the following items that would be held over for further discussion:

- Potential regulation of staffing agencies or designation of OHCA preferred providers.
- Grant-funded mentorship program – more information would be sent out.
- Medication aides/medication administration – needed more exploration.
- LPN programs in career centers – the Lieutenant Governor said this was being done, mainly in partnership with hospitals.
- Nurse aide training lockout – this was a federal issue, and AHCA/NCAL said legislation would be reintroduced.
- Immigration – AHCA and a number of other organizations sent a letter to the State Department pushing for higher prioritization of nurses and other licensed professionals.
- Benefit cliffs – also a federal issue.

Nathan Carder suggested that if a vaccine mandate was put in place, providers should have access to the state website to verify vaccination status. Mr. Rickels said some counties, such as Mahoning and Stark, had started their own workforce task forces.

Mr. Van Runkle said he would follow up with the committee in writing on a number of the items discussed because many members had not been able to stay on the meeting until the end.

The meeting was adjourned.

Attendance:

First Name	Last Name	9-Aug	13-Sep
Amy	Allen	P	P
Andrew	Austin	P	
Erin	Begin	P	P
Brandi	Body		P
Tammy	Bonifas	P	
Nicole	Breving	P	
Jamie	Brose	P	P
Nathan	Carder		P
Joe	Chesney		
Angena	Collier	P	
Pam	Cooke	P	P
Melissa	Courtock		P
Diane	Dietz	P	P
Nancy	Erwin	P	P
Cayleigh	Esterly		P
Ken	Fetterman	P	P
John	Goodman	P	P
Alana	Griffin	P	
Deanna	Hatfield	P	
Jill	Herron	P	P
Brenda	Honigford	P	P
Judy	Howell		
Eric	Hutchins	P	
Debbie	Jenkins	P	P
Brandi	Johnson		P
John	Jones	P	P
Gina	Kerman	P	P

Eileen	Kilbane	P	P
Renee	Kinder		
Brian	Kinzer	P	P
Karen	Knavel	P	P
Kelsey	Knisley	P	
Eitan	Laghaie	P	
Joan	Longhin-Howard	P	P
Heidi	McCoy		P
Brenda	Milanczuk	P	
Steve	Miller	P	
Jeremy	Monroe	P	P
Bridgett	Mundy		P
Shelly	Orlowski	P	P
Rob	Pivonka	P	P
Tom	Rickels	P	P
Melanie	Rittenour	P	P
Mark	Schlater	P	P
Carol	Slight	P	P
Mandy	Smith		P
Nicole	Sprenger	P	
Michael	Tenenbaum		
Pete	Van Runkle	P	P
Aubrey	Varner	P	