

Medicaid in Ohio: What's Happening, What's Coming, and What We Can Do About It

VOICE Webinar Summary – July 21, 2025

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Summary Overview

This webinar provided an in-depth update on the current state of Medicaid in Ohio, how state and federal budgets are affecting services, and what changes may be coming. It also outlined practical steps families and advocates can take to protect access to critical services.

Current Concerns (With Explanations)

- **Trigger Language in State Budget:**
 - If the federal government cuts Medicaid, Ohio's 2025–2027 budget includes a trigger clause to automatically reduce state Medicaid funding. This creates the risk of rapid, unplanned cuts to services.
- **Provider Rate Freeze:**
 - No increases are planned for provider reimbursement rates through at least 2027. This freeze affects Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), making workforce shortages worse.
- **Eligibility Audits:**
 - Starting in late 2025, Ohio will audit ABD (Aged, Blind, or Disabled) Medicaid recipients. These audits check for income/assets that might disqualify people. Some families may be flagged due to misunderstandings at the county level.
- **Stable Account Clawback Removed:**
 - Ohio has ended its practice of reclaiming STABLE account funds after a person's death. Families should still name beneficiaries and have wills to avoid probate issues.
- **Assessment Tool Overhaul:**
 - Ohio will replace outdated DDP and Acuity Assessments with a new tool to determine waiver funding. This may result in funding shifts if new dollars are not added to the system.

What's Happening Now (Detailed Breakdown)

- **No Current Cuts or Rate Increases:**
 - The current Ohio budget for Medicaid does not include any reductions or increases in funding. While services are continuing as-is, providers are not seeing wage increases, and no new programs have been added.
- **Medicaid Audits:**
 - Beginning in late 2025, the Ohio Department of Medicaid will audit individuals in the Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) eligibility group to ensure they still qualify. Audits will check income, bank accounts, and assets. Some individuals might be flagged due to local county errors or data mismatches.
- **SSA Training Requirement:**
 - Newly hired Service and Support Administrators (SSAs) must now complete state-mandated training within 30 days of their hire date. This ensures consistency across counties and helps SSAs understand changes to waiver services.
- **Stable Accounts:**
 - The clawback provision has been removed, meaning Ohio will no longer reclaim STABLE account balances after a participant's death. However, naming a beneficiary and creating a will remains essential to ensure funds are distributed properly.
- **Assessment Tool Development:**
 - Ohio is developing a new funding assessment system to replace the current DDP and Acuity tools. The new system will be implemented in 2–3 years and may shift funding levels for individuals based on different scoring methods. Participation in pilot feedback is encouraged.

Future Concerns (What They Mean & Timeline)

- **Medicaid Expansion Rollback:**
 - Could remove coverage for 750,000 Ohioans, including many caregivers and DSPs. This would disrupt care access and health equity.
 - Timeline: Risk increases in 2025–2026 if federal or state policy shifts.
- **Copays & Service Restrictions:**

- Ohio may introduce cost-sharing for Medicaid services, deterring families from using them and reducing health outcomes.
- Timeline: Possible during future budget cycles—watch for proposals in 2026.
- **Eligibility Criteria Changes:**
 - Ohio could restrict definitions of who qualifies for waivers, possibly excluding high-functioning individuals with real needs.
 - Timeline: May coincide with rollout of new assessment tool in 2026–2027.
- **Loss of Local Levy Funding:**
 - Reductions in county tax levies could freeze or limit waiver enrollment for new applicants.
 - Timeline: Dependent on local votes—watch upcoming elections in 2026 and 2027.
- **Rural Hospital Closures:**
 - Increased uninsured rates could push small hospitals to close, especially in underserved areas.
 - Timeline: Ongoing concern, but risk rises if Medicaid cuts are implemented in 2025–2026.
- **Institutionalization Risks:**
 - Lack of adequate funding and provider shortages could force individuals back into institutions.
 - Timeline: A long-term risk that could worsen with budget cuts between 2025–2027.

What We Can Do

- **Stay Informed & Share:**
 - Autism Society of Greater Akron’s upcoming August VOICE session: <https://autismakron.org/augustvoice/>
- **Contact Legislators:**
 - Ohio State Legislators <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov>
 - U.S. Congress (Ohio Delegation) <https://www.congress.gov/members?q={%22congress%22:118,%22state%22:%22OH%22>
- **Encourage Local Advocacy:**
 - Attend local board meetings
 - Support county levy renewals



- Join family advisory councils
- **Register Concerns Directly:**
 - Governor DeWine's Office <https://governor.ohio.gov>
 - Ohio Department of Medicaid <https://medicaid.ohio.gov>

Resources & Links (With Descriptions)

- **The Arc of Ohio** – Statewide advocacy group protecting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
<https://www.thearcofohio.org>
 - **Ohio State Legislature Lookup** – Find and contact your state senator or representative.
<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov>
 - **U.S. Congress Members from Ohio** – List of current Ohio senators and representatives in the 118th U.S. Congress.
<https://www.congress.gov/members?q={%22congress%22:118,%22state%22:%22OH%22}>
 - **Governor Mike DeWine's Office** – Submit opinions or concerns directly to the governor's staff.
<https://governor.ohio.gov>
 - **Ohio Department of Medicaid** – Official state agency managing Medicaid benefits and programs.
<https://medicaid.ohio.gov>
 - **STABLE Accounts (Ohio Treasurer)** – Information on Ohio's STABLE accounts for individuals with disabilities.
<https://stableaccount.com>
- Autism Society of Greater Akron's Recorded Webinar on STABLE Accounts:
<https://autismakron.org/webinars/stable-accounts/>