



2019 Ohio Medicaid Concerns

Shared by Ohio foster care youth, alumni and adoptees

The OHIO YAB (Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio) is Ohio's statewide voice of young people (aged 14-24) who have experienced foster care. We exist to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that impact youth who have or will experience out of home care.

ACTION Ohio (Alumni of Care Together Improving Outcomes Now) heads up ongoing initiatives including College for the Day, Suits for Success, Pay It Forward, Thanksgiving Together and Three Days on the Hill.

Adoption Network Cleveland: The Ohio Family Connection™ (ANC) provides information, advocacy, education and support for adoptees, birthparents, foster/adoptive/kinship care providers, foster youth and their siblings, and professionals. Their initiatives include Reconnections, which provides peer group and/or one-on-one support for young adults who have aged out of foster care and are exploring relationships with birth family members.

The Columbus State Scholar Network provides current or former foster youth who are admitted and enrolled at Columbus State with ongoing mentorship, peer support, and leadership experience.

Desired Outcome:

We would love to work with you to design a creative method to ensure that Medicaid staff are aware of former foster youth's eligibility for Medicaid, when it comes to enrollment and renewal.

- 1.) Could this be made into an annual and mandatory training topic for Medicaid staff?
- 2.) Could the new Medicaid system be programmed with a proactive mechanism that ensures that frontline staff members recognize that former foster youth are eligible?
- 3.) **Could a Medicaid intake and renewal team be assembled that focuses specifically on just these cases?**

1.) Medicaid Renewal Process for Former Foster Youth:

- We have a former foster youth who now works for Medicaid as a renewal worker. Before the foster care alumni was hired, and began to share the news, some of their coworkers had never been told that former foster youth were an eligible population for Ohio Medicaid until age 26.
- This person and their coworkers have shared that, from their perspective, there is not a proactive mechanism to promote sharing of Medicaid eligibility for former foster youth through a central hub.
- They expressed concerns that the new Medicaid system is not programmed to effectively communicate this information, or to confirm Medicaid eligibility for former foster youth.
- *“There is no clear way to identify people as former foster youth when processing their information, so this makes it difficult for Medicaid staff to know who is and is not eligible.”*
- *“It’s just like with adoption. If people are adopted at a certain age, they are eligible for Medicaid under foster care too - but we have no way of verifying this information because foster care cases are confidential, and the information does not transfer over to us when they are adults.”*

2.) Caseworker/Bridges Liaison concerns:

- Caseworker and Bridges Liaisons have shared that even when they print and bring the Foster Youth Medicaid flyer from the ODJFS webpage, the frontline person doesn't always recognize it and argues with them.
- Quote: *“I’ve been with young people and they wouldn’t accept it and when we asked to speak to a supervisor, we’re told there aren’t any, they’re at lunch, busy, etc.”*

3.) Concerns from young adults with a foster care history:

- We have received multiple reports from former foster youth (between 18-25 years old) that they have gone to their local Medicaid office and been told they aren't eligible for Medicaid. Our young people who are and have been struggling with this issue would be happy to share their voices firsthand.
- Sample quote: *“I am a former foster youth who lost my coverage in September and I have had no health coverage since then. And I have applied for it. I’m only 21. It’s terrible not having health insurance because now I can’t afford my medicine. And appointments.”*