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GOVERNOR TARGETS INVESTMENTS TO HELP OHIO'S CHILDREN
Children's health care, home visiting, and community based treatment for juveniles receive essential funding

COLUMBUS, March 15, 2011—Child advocates acknowledge Governor Kasich’s targeted investments for kids in the SFY 2012-2013 budget. “Given the extreme challenges faced in this budget, Governor Kasich’s plan makes strategic investments in what will work to help make kids healthier and families stronger,” said Amy Swanson, CEO of Voices for Ohio’s Children.

In particular, Governor Kasich maintains health coverage for children living in families with incomes between 200 percent of the federal poverty level (around $44,000 for a family of four); funds home visiting services for first-time mothers and their babies program and resources to support community-based treatment for juveniles.

Every month, Medicaid cover nearly 1.2 million Ohio children, helping reduce the number of uninsured children below the national average. Comprehensive health coverage and access to care help children get a health care needs from head to toe.

"With just a few visits, Help Me Grow provides new parents with the skills they need to raise healthy children,” said Swanson. “That’s a smart investment in preventing costly problems before they happen. And when Help Me Grow finds a child who needs special help with a disability, federal Part C funds pay for treatment and services to help that child catch up and thrive.”

RECLAIM and the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) initiatives seek to reduce our reliance on costly institutional care. RECLAIM encourages juvenile courts to serve more youth locally where families can participate more fully in their treatment. Ohio institutions are 65 percent less crowded than when RECLAIM started in 1993. BHJJ serves serious juvenile offenders who have co-occurring behavioral health care needs. By diverting youth from detention centers into more comprehensive, community-based, evidence-based mental and behavioral health treatment, they will get the right care so they can lead productive lives.

Child advocates believe more state investments are needed in quality early childhood and afterschool programs, emergency food and groceries for needy families, and supports for most vulnerable children in our child welfare system are still needed in the state’s plan. Swanson said “We look forward to working in the upcoming months to make the case that these programs will strengthen Ohio’s economy for the future and support families who are struggling right now.”

“Governor Kasich’s plan helps sustain gains for kids in tough budget times,” said Swanson. “The Governor’s plan is an important step along the way. We need Ohio leaders to maintain investments in Ohio’s children because it is the right thing to do, for our economy and our kids.”

Voices for Ohio’s Children is a non-partisan voice of Ohio’s nearly 3 million children. With more than 200 collaborative partners, we advance changes in public policy that improve the health, safety, education, and family stability of all Ohio children and their families. To learn more about Voices for Ohio’s Children, please visit www.vfc-oh.org.

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