Ohio BOLD BEGINNING!

Healthy, Supported Families

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Science has proven that a child's first years influence his or her health and success for their entire lives. That's why Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has invested nearly one billion dollars to help ensure each child has the resources and supports to have every opportunity for a bright future. Rooted in research, the next phase of Bold Beginning will expand existing programs and invest in new, promising practices that will lead to healthy, supported families.

Ohio will expand access to pre-and post-natal care to improve outcomes for women.

The Ohio Department of Medicaid launched Comprehensive Maternal Care, a partnership with OB/GYN practices to connect expectant moms with care earlier in their pregnancy, focusing on improving birth outcomes and reducing maternal and fetal mortality and morbidity. In addition, expectant moms will receive guidance and personalized assistance to access services, supports, and health care tailored to their individual needs and circumstances.

Governor DeWine will also work with the legislature to provide Medicaid health coverage to more pregnant women and children, by increasing eligibility to working families who make up to 300% of the federal poverty level. For a single, expectant mother, that's $54,930 a year. For a family of three, that's $69,090 a year.

Ohio will reduce economic barriers to adoption by expanding Medicaid coverage to more adopted children.

Currently, children adopted through the public children services system have access to ongoing Medicaid coverage, but children adopted through private agencies lack this opportunity. Ohio will pursue a federal waiver to provide children adopted through private agencies with Medicaid coverage, especially for children with complex medical conditions.

Partnering with Ohio hospitals and birthing centers, the Ohio Department of Health will implement a variety of evidence-based clinical practices to reduce complications and improve maternal and fetal outcomes.

By standardizing best practices in caring for pregnant women and their babies, we can reduce prenatal and postnatal complications, morbidities, and mortality. Ohio's birthing hospitals are largely already offering these quality services and practices, but by collectively sharing and standardizing best practices, Ohio can improve outcomes and strive to reduce overall costs for consumers.

Ohio will make the Electronic Pregnancy Risk Assessment Form easier for providers to complete, helping to connect more vulnerable moms to the services and supports they need.

This form helps doctors and other health professionals determine if state or community assistance is needed to provide stable housing, home visiting, nutrition, and education. By further incentivizing providers to complete this form, we can connect more moms with critical services that contribute to a healthy, stable environment, ultimately leading to improved outcomes.

Ohio will expand access to safe, stable housing for pregnant and new mothers, helping to reduce infant mortality and improve maternal health.

Programs such as Healthy Beginnings at Home, which connects housing insecure pregnant women and new mothers with housing and wrap-around supports, are virtually eliminating infant mortality among the families they serve.

Ohio will expand access to safe, stable housing for moms by pursuing a federal waiver to provide short-term housing and wrap around care to pregnant women and new families who are struggling to find stable housing. Additionally, the Healthy Beginnings at Home program will expand to more Ohio communities.

The State of Ohio is making it easier for moms to welcome new babies by extending paid maternity leave for state employees and will work with the legislature to reduce red tape.

The Ohio Department of Administrative Services will work with the General Assembly to expand maternity leave benefits and eliminate the two-week waiting period for new parents to access paid leave, allowing parents more time with their new child.

Ohio will expand programs designed to meaningfully engage fathers in the lives of their children.

Research shows that having an engaged father can reduce behavioral problems, improve academic outcomes, and reduce poverty among children. Programming through the Ohio Fatherhood Commission will be expanded to serve more fathers and their children statewide.

Ohio will eliminate taxes on diapers, wipes cribs, bassinets, car seats, safety equipment, and more.

Governor DeWine will work with the General Assembly to ensure that items vital to the health and wellbeing of babies are accessible to all Ohio families. By eliminating state and local taxes on these products, we can save families with young children hundreds of dollars each year.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will develop an education and workforce development program for fathers who owe child support.

Too many Ohio fathers who have child support obligations lack the education and skills to meaningfully provide for their children. The Department will partner with workforce development agencies and child support enforcement agencies to help fathers who have child support obligations upskill themselves and increase their earning potential.

Ohio will expand the reach of perinatal depression screening tools to more quickly identify mothers struggling with depression and connect them to necessary care.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services will launch a statewide campaign to increase awareness about the importance of about the importance of mental and emotional health of pregnant and parenting moms through a statewide campaign and expand the reach of depression screening tools by health care practitioners will lead to better outcomes for moms and their babies.

Ohio will ensure that more pregnant women and mothers with young children have access to the nutrition services they need to help themselves and their children thrive.

Ohio has developed a technological solution to help families enroll in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Woman, Infants, and Children Program (WIC). These two nutrition programs have different enrollment processes, often leading to families not recieving all of the nutrition benefits they are eligible for. So far, this pilot program has helped connect more than 1,600 Ohioans to additional WIC nutritional supports.

Ohio will expand programs providing cribs, play yards, and car seats to families in need.

The Ohio Department of Health will expand programs that provide vulnerable expectant and new families with material assistance designed to reduce injuries and sleep related incidents.

Ohio Department of Health will expand its safe sleep program to better educate and support families in creating safe sleep environments for their children.

The Ohio Department of Health is increasing their safe sleep education program. Ohio's newly certified foster parents will receive safe sleep information, and a partnership with Direct on Scene Education will educate first responders about safe sleep in order to provide real-time safe sleep education and connect families with needed resources. The Ohio Department of Health's Cribs for Kids program distributes thousands of cribs to families will be expanding to reach even more Ohioans.

Ohio will work to create parity between public and private adoptions.

Governor DeWine will work with the General Assembly to offer $1,000 toward legal costs associated with private adoptions to reduce the financial burden of expanding families through adoption.

OhioRISE

Ohio has launched, Ohio Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence (OhioRISE), a new specialized managed care behavioral health program for young people who have the most complex medical and behavioral health care needs.

Too often, families of children with complex medical and behavioral needs struggle to find the care their child needs. Families will receive support navigating and and coordinating their child's care across systems and providers. Through care coordination, children access the services they need and families stay together.

Ohio will expand access to quality child care to more working Ohio families.

Since taking office, Governor DeWine has expanded quality, early childhood programs for families across the state. Since 2019, Governor DeWine helped increase the number of quality-rated child care providers from less than 40% to all providers receiving public funds.

Governor DeWine will work with the legislature to increase eligibility for publicly funded child care to 150% of the federal poverty level – nearly $42,000 for a family of 4. This will help more working-class families access care. Additionally, Governor DeWine intends to create small business start up grants that will help child care providers cover their start up costs, with a priority focus on areas of the state that are child care deserts.

Ohio will expand evidence-based home visiting services to more families by continuing our historic investment in Help Me Grow.

Evidence-based home visiting programs provide families with the education and supports they need to promote proper development, and kindergarten readiness. These programs have prescribed curricula to help parents improve their own health, set goals, and overcome challenges. Governor DeWine will expand the program to reach even more families across Ohio, including a new model focused on post-partum home visiting.

Ohio will once again dramatically increase funding for children's services to ensure that the best interests of children are always the priority.

In 2019, Governor DeWine created the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council to provide a comprehensive review and a set of recommendations to improve it.

Their final report included 37 recommendations in workforce, practice, and adoption. All 37 are currently implemented or are underway at the Department of Job and Family Services, including the creation of a Youth and Family Ombudsmen Office to investigate and help resolve concerns involving children and families impacted by foster care and public children services agencies. To ensure that public children services agencies have the resources they need to focus on a child's best interest, the next budget will include additional funding for public children services agencies to meet increased demand.