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**Ohio Medicaid efforts have impacted and continue to impact health coverage for Ohioans**

Efforts to increase health care coverage for Ohio's children over the past decade are working as fewer children are uninsured than four years ago, according to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). Additional initiatives proposed in the ODJFS biennium budget will serve to reduce the number of children without coverage.

According to the 2008 Family Health Survey released today, the number of children without insurance dropped to 4 percent in 2008, from 5.4 percent in 2004 and from 9.8 percent in 1998, when the first survey was conducted.

"We have made great strides in ensuring that our children have access to the health care they need to grow up healthy and thrive as adults," said John Corlett, assistant director of the ODJFS Office of Ohio Health Plans (OHP). "We are certainly drawing close to the completion of this goal by taking steps to ensure the remaining uninsured children have access to coverage. In the governor's proposed budget, he's expanding coverage so that all of Ohio's children are insured."

The proposed Medicaid budget, currently under consideration by the Ohio General Assembly, includes funding to implement an increase in Medicaid eligibility authorized in the last state budget. Eligibility would be increased from 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) to 300 percent FPL, and families would be asked to pay a small premium. This would provide access for health care coverage to an additional 20,000 uninsured children.

ODJFS is also proposing changes that would increase access to the Children's Buy-In Program, which provides health care coverage to uninsured special-needs children in families with incomes more than 300 percent FPL.

With more than 51,000 households interviewed, the Ohio Family Health Survey is one of the largest and most comprehensive state-level health and insurance surveys conducted in the country. The project was managed by The Ohio State University's Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center and the Health Policy Institute of Ohio. The survey was conducted by Macro International. The Ohio Departments of Insurance, Job and Family Services, Health, and Mental Health, the Cleveland State University, and the Ohio Board of Regents funded the project.