

## Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Medicaid Health Homes Will Coordinate Services**

*New initiative launched this October in five counties marks the ongoing partnership between the Department of Mental Health and Ohio Medicaid*

Today, public officials and community advocates visited Toledo's Zepf Center to announce a statewide initiative focused on coordinating mental and physical health care and boosting the overall health of Ohio's Medicaid enrollees with serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI).

The Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH), in conjunction with the Office of Medical Assistance (Ohio Medicaid), first will implement the new Medicaid benefit -- called a Health Home -- in five Ohio counties, including Adams, Butler, Lawrence, Lucas and Scioto. Within a year, the benefit delivered by community behavioral health providers will be available statewide.

"This is an attempt to break down the barriers that currently exist between physical health care and mental health services," said Tracy Plouck, Director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health. "By linking comprehensive, long-term medical and behavioral health to social services, we are hoping to assist more Ohioans in living healthier lives."

Case management provided through Medicaid Health Homes will coordinate mental health services and assist individuals in finding a family doctor, pediatrician, dentist, nutritionist or other specialist. Additionally, reminders will be sent to beneficiaries regarding regular check-ups and preventative health care needs. Connections to supports such as transportation and child care will also be made available through the new service.

"Research has shown individuals living with mental illnesses commonly experience serious physical health conditions," said state Medicaid Director John McCarthy. "This new avenue to greater care coordination will place a renewed emphasis on prevention and improved treatment."

Last year's biennial budget authorized Ohio Medicaid to design a new person-centered system of care to integrate physical and behavioral health care needs. This first phase in five counties will represent rural, suburban and urban populations, and diversity in the models of care. Phases II and III of the initiative will bring health homes to all parts of the state during 2013.

More information about Medicaid Health Homes is available by calling the Medicaid Consumer Hotline at 1-800-324-8680.