

2015 Priority Issue: Health



United Way of the
Greater Dayton Area

United Way of the Greater Dayton Area (UWGDA) advocates for policies that promote positive health for families and individuals. Therefore, the UWGDA would like to ask our legislators to support legislation that will promote the following initiatives:

- **Decrease in Infant Mortality Rate:** UWGDA is asking that our legislators not support a change in the Medicaid eligibility criteria for pregnant women. In addition, UWGDA asks our legislators to not support the proposed “lock out” periods for missed payments or late paperwork. A lack of access to sufficient health care for pregnant women could likely increase the infant mortality rate in our state.

Current Need: The infant mortality rate is determined based on the amount of infant deaths per 1000 births. In 2012, the infant mortality rate was 5.05 in Greene County, 7.99 in Montgomery County, and 8.93 in Preble County. [1] Our state has one of the worst infant mortality rates in the country. If the eligibility criteria for Medicaid changes for pregnant women from 200% of the federal poverty level to 138% of the federal poverty level than those women will no longer have access to necessary prenatal care. Even if these women can afford to access insurance through the Marketplace they will still have to wait for the open enrollment period, which can leave them with gaps in healthcare access.

- **Decrease Opioid Use:** UWGDA is asking our legislators to support funding in areas that will help to decrease heroin use in our communities. UWGDA supports programs such as Project DAWN, Heroin Hotline with Montgomery County ADAMHS, and Carepoint at Life Enrichment Center in Montgomery County. These programs are examples of how our community and state can work to decrease the heroin epidemic.

Current Need: According to the Ohio Department of Health’s Drug Overdose Data, in 2013 there were 2,110 deaths in our state due to drug overdose; over three quarters were contributed to opioid use. In Montgomery County the deaths due to heroin overdose increased from 95 in 2012 to 132 in 2013. [2] Montgomery, Greene, and Preble Counties are all considered “hot spots” for heroin use based on an analysis of self reports from individuals receiving drug treatment services. [3] Heroin and opioid use in our communities has become a public health emergency that calls for collaboration and support from our legislators, health and human services, families, and our community as a whole.

- **Access to Mental and Medical Health Care:** UWGDA is asking that our legislators continue to support funding for all Medicaid programs, including eligibility for single individuals at 138% of the federal poverty level so that more individuals in our communities have access to medical and mental health services.

Current Need: Medicaid expansion makes it possible for individuals in our communities to receive necessary medical and mental health services. These are services that these individuals would have otherwise not been able to afford. Untreated medical and mental health issues can cause a spiraling effect on all aspects of an individual’s life. As a community we must insure that all individuals, regardless of income level, have equal access to mental and medical health care.

[1] Ohio Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics. (2013). Neonatal, postneonatal, and infant mortality, Ohio and Selected counties, 2007-2012. Retrieved from <https://www.odh.ohio.gov/~media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/cfhs/Infant%20Mortality/collaborative/2014/2007-2012%20IM%20BY%20RACE%20%20COUNTY.ashx>

[2] Public Health-Dayton and Montgomery County. (2014). Summary of the Montgomery County Poisoning Death Review: 2010 – 2013. Retrieved from http://www.phdmc.org/news/item/release_of_montgomery_county_poisoning_death_review_report

[3] Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services. (2014). Opiate Hot Spot Analysis by County. Retrieved from <http://mha.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=701#2347741-opiate-hot-spot-analysis-by-county>