



FOUR CRITICAL STEPS TO ADDRESS OHIO RESIDENTS' HEALTHCARE AFFORDABILITY CONCERNS

A 2019 poll of Ohio residents, ages 18 and older, reveals that healthcare is the top concern that they want policymakers to address, trumping the economy, jobs and other concerns. Specifically, addressing high healthcare costs was the most pressing concern, even though many respondents remained concerned about health coverage issues.

Few states have a comprehensive plan for addressing healthcare affordability, yet the elements that need to be addressed are well understood:

1. CLOSE THE INSURANCE COVERAGE GAP

Quite simply, the vast majority of Ohioans cannot afford healthcare without health coverage. Moreover, getting as near to universal coverage as possible has public health benefits, worker productivity benefits and other spillover effects. Achieving this goal will require a re-examination of how insurance premiums are subsidized (whether through tax credits, employer contributions, etc.) to eliminate cost as a barrier to getting comprehensive, protective coverage.¹

2. ALIGNING ACROSS PAYERS, USE EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACHES TO COST-SHARING DESIGN

We need to be thoughtful about how cost sharing (deductibles, copays, coinsurance) are structured to avoid creating barriers to people getting the care they need, while still discouraging low-value care. Fortunately, we have strong evidence to guide these decisions.² Moreover, we need to ensure that health plan designs are reliably protective and do not contain surprise gaps in coverage by addressing surprise medical bills, short-term plan designs and other consumer-unfriendly practices.

3. ADDRESS WASTEFUL SPENDING THAT INCREASES THE UNDERLYING COST OF HEALTHCARE

Through confidential feedback reports to providers, public reporting, value-based purchasing and other techniques, states can work in partnerships across payers to reduce spending on unneeded services, estimated to increase our overall health spending by 20% or more.³ Similarly, these techniques can be deployed to ensure that we spend sufficiently on high-value care, potentially saving money down the road.

4. ADDRESS EXCESS HEALTHCARE PRICES THAT INCREASE THE UNDERLYING COST OF HEALTHCARE

Especially in markets that lack competition, addressing excessive healthcare prices is challenging. However, year-over-year increases in the prices of MRIs, hospital days and prescription drugs are overwhelmingly the largest drivers of increasing health spending. States must adopt a graduated approach to dealing with stubbornly high and increasing prices.

Regular consumer surveys can inform policymakers as to whether or not progress is being made. Though policies to address affordability are critical, we must keep in mind that they are just one part of the overall approach states should consider. For a comprehensive approach to high-value, equitable, patient-centered healthcare, please see the reverse side. #Path2HighValue

1. <https://www.healthcarevaluehub.org/improving-value/browse-strategy/affordable-premium-setting-and-cost-sharing>

2. Ibid.

3. <https://www.healthcarevaluehub.org/advocate-resources/publications/reducing-low-value-care-saving-money-and-improving-health>

GUIDE TO HIGH-VALUE HEALTHCARE

Addressing Drivers of High Costs, Uneven Quality & Health Inequities

