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H.B. 7
135th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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Version: As Passed by the Senate

Primary Sponsors: Reps. White and Humphrey

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The Department of Children and Youth (DCY) will realize costs to review Head Start Program performance standards and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards and to rate impacted child care entities accordingly. However, some administrative costs might eventually be reduced if this simplifies the rating process.
- DCY will experience an increase in costs to ensure there is a comprehensive screening and connection program to support the coordination of home visiting services. Costs will depend on how the program will be implemented and may include administrative or information technology costs.
- DCY will experience an increase in costs to ensure state entities have information to promote the benefits of evidence-based parenting education programs. Costs will depend on how this information is provided. Costs would be higher if printing or other media methods were used.
- The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) will experience some administrative costs to establish a plan to increase access to and use of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and to submit reports to the General Assembly. However, WIC costs are federally funded.
- The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) will incur costs to update and evaluate Medicaid's coverage of evidence-based mental health and dyadic family therapy services intended for children from birth through age five, as well as their caregivers. ODM will also incur costs to develop associated policy and billing guidance.

- ODM will also be required to enter into several interagency agreements to assist in the implementation of the Help Me Grow Program and to assist in establishing coordination of, and proposing workforce capacity improvements for, home-visiting services across the state. ODM will likely experience small administrative costs to participate in these projects. ODM will additionally experience minimal costs to conduct a study regarding the reimbursement of evidence-based peer-to-peer programming that supports infant vitality.

Detailed Analysis

Ohio Department of Children and Youth provisions

Help Me Grow

The bill requires, rather than authorizes as under current law, the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) to enter into interagency agreements with one or more state agencies to implement, coordinate, and maximize federal reimbursement for the Help Me Grow Program. The bill supplements Help Me Grow's existing central intake and referral system, by requiring DCY to ensure there is a consistent comprehensive screening and connection program to support the coordination of home visiting services across the state. DCY is required to evaluate the program's effectiveness at least once annually. DCY is also required to streamline the system to ensure families and children receive services from home visiting programs that are appropriate to their level of needs.

The bill also specifies families in the child welfare systems as priority recipients of home visiting services under Help Me Grow.

DCY is required to include in its existing annual report on data received from providers an evaluation addressing the number of families and children served, the number and type of services provided, health and developmental outcomes for participating families and children, and variation in outcomes between the different types of home visiting programs. The report must be submitted to the General Assembly. DCY, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM), is required to propose strategies to increase the workforce capacity of home visiting service providers and parenting support professionals.

Fiscal impact

DCY will experience an increase in costs to ensure there is a comprehensive screening and connection program to support the coordination of home visiting services. Costs will depend on how the program will be implemented and may include administrative or information technology costs. DCY will also experience costs to evaluate the effectiveness of the program on an annual basis. Costs to evaluate will depend on whether DCY currently conducts any evaluation activities and how the bill differs from current practice. DCY may also incur minimal administrative costs to include additional information in its existing annual report and to develop strategies to increase workforce capacity of home visiting services.

Head Start and Step Up to Quality

The bill requires DCY to periodically review Head Start program performance standards and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards and determine which Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) ratings tier corresponds with minimum Head Start and NAEYC standards. The bill also requires DCY, beginning July 1, 2025, to rate each

licensed child care center and type A and B family child care home operating or under contract to provide a Head Start or Early Head Start program or a program accredited by NAEYC in the Step Up to Quality tier that DCY has determined corresponds with minimum Head Start or NAEYC standards.

Fiscal impact

DCY will realize costs to review these standards and to rate impacted entities accordingly. However, according to the Ohio Head Start Association, Inc., since impacted facilities would be rated in the appropriate Step Up to Quality tier due to their accreditation, there might eventually be some reductions in administrative work for DCY to rate facilities. Any other impacts will depend on a facility's current ranking versus the ranking that DCY determines corresponds to the Head Start or NAEYC standards.

Parenting education programs

The bill requires DCY to ensure state entities have information to (1) communicate with parents, caregivers, and child care providers about evidence-based parenting education programs, and (2) promote such programs' benefits, including their parenting, caregiving, and educational resources.

Fiscal impact

DCY will experience an increase in costs to ensure state entities have information to provide information and promote the benefits of evidence-based parenting education programs. Costs will depend on the methods employed to provide this information. For instance, costs would be higher if printing or other media methods were employed versus if the data is provided electronically.

Ohio Commission on Fatherhood

In its existing annual report, the bill requires the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood to evaluate the number of fathers and children served and the number of types of additional services provided as a result of the recommendations required under H.B. 33 regarding the funding, approval, and implementation of fatherhood programs meeting at least one of the four purposes of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. The bill also requires the Commission to submit the report to the General Assembly.

Fiscal impact

There may be minimal costs to compile and provide the additional information in the annual report.

Ohio Department of Health provisions

WIC enrollment

The bill requires the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to investigate and determine the services and tools available at the federal level and the services and tools implemented in other states that could be implemented in Ohio to increase access to and use of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Within 60 days of the bill's effective date, ODH must submit a report to the General Assembly summarizing the results of the investigation and establishing a plan to increase access to and use of WIC. Beginning three months after the bill's effective date, and continuing for two years, ODH is required to submit

quarterly reports to the General Assembly detailing progress on implementing the plan, including expenditures, changes made to the WIC program, the total number of women and children served, any other relevant outcomes, and opportunities to further increase the number of women and children served.

Fiscal impact

ODH will experience some administrative costs to establish a plan to increase access to and use of the WIC program, to submit the report to the General Assembly regarding services and tools available at the federal level and those implemented in other states, and to submit quarterly reports regarding the plan to the General Assembly as well. Costs regarding the plan itself will depend on the services and tools implemented. If access and use is increased, WIC participation and benefit costs will increase. However, WIC benefits and administrative costs are federally funded.

Ohio Department of Medicaid

Medicaid mental health

The bill requires the Medicaid Director, by June 30, 2026, to evaluate and update the Medicaid Program's coverage of evidence-based and evidence-informed mental health and dyadic family therapy services for children and their caregivers, to improve outcomes from birth to age five. The Medicaid Director is required to develop policy and billing guidance for Medicaid providers to improve the use of mental health and dyadic family therapy services and to encourage use of specified diagnosis tools and billing codes.

Fiscal impact

Requirements for the Medicaid Director to develop policy and billing guidance may lead to administrative costs. If the policy and guidance leads to increased billing for Medicaid services, the Department may experience increased costs in the long term.

Infant vitality supports and interagency agreements

The bill requires ODM to conduct a study regarding the reimbursement of evidence-based peer-to-peer programming that supports infant vitality. The bill additionally requires ODM to establish an interagency agreement with DCY to implement the Help Me Grow Program. Also in concert with other state agencies, the bill requires ODM to assist in coordinating home visiting services and to propose strategies to increase the workforce capacity of home visiting services.

Fiscal impact

ODM may realize a minimal increase in costs to conduct the study. ODM will also likely experience a small increase in administrative costs to participate in the interagency agreements pertaining to the Help Me Grow Program and home visiting services.