May 16, 2018

Medicaid.gov
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

On behalf of the 5,000 family physician, family medicine resident and medical student members of the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians, I write to express extreme concern with the 1115 waiver application filed by the Ohio Department of Medicaid with CMS to seek federal approval to implement a work requirement for Medicaid expansion enrollees on July 1, 2018.

As primary care physicians serving on the front lines of patient care in Ohio, we know firsthand that approval of Ohio’s waiver application would be a devastating blow to progress made in providing health care coverage to Ohio’s Medicaid and other low-income populations. This waiver application, as written, threatens coverage of an estimated 36,000 adult Ohioans who now have coverage – a huge step backwards in achieving the American Academy of Family Physicians’ long-standing goal of achieving health care coverage for all. This waiver, if approved, reverses gains made when Medicaid was expanded and care was improved by transitioning services from expensive hospital emergency departments to less expensive outpatient settings.

We understand that many states are pursuing policies to seek to undermine Medicaid expansion provided under the ACA. This particular step in the process to dismantle the ACA will lead to a broad disenrollment of Ohioans who need health care coverage. This waiver increases administrative burdens for physicians, other healthcare professionals, and county governmental agencies who have to implement the work requirement; thus expending more time, effort and money completing paperwork and less time, effort and money on meeting human needs.

Waivers were created to foster innovation not to undermine the original objectives of the Medicaid program. Reducing coverage and access is not the direction we should be heading as a state or nation. Please reject Ohio’s 1115 waiver application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Donald O. Mack, MD
President