



**Information Relay with Partners**

**Volume II, Issue 2, April 2014**

## **Welcome to HireGround!**

The Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency (OOD) produces this bimonthly newsletter expressly for our VR professional audience. We hope that the stories, best practices and practical tips we share will be of use and value to you as we continue our relationship and work with participants to achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through our mutual integrated services, partnerships and innovation. For questions, suggestions or comments on this newsletter, please contact [elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov). Thank you for reading this information and sharing as appropriate.

Our next *HireGround* issue is slated to address what some governors have called "the other Ohio." We will examine life and work realities outside the city scope that makes up the "3 C's" (Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland.) If you have a success story or best practice from your work in this sphere, please email the *HireGround* coordinator above. Thanks!

## **Introduction**

The best lead to this issue of *HireGround* comes from a nomination for Unit 7D in OOD's Disability Determination Division, which received OOD's Excellence in Service award in February. "Individuals in Unit 7D are dedicated to serving the mission of OOD by collaborating with SSA field offices, mental health centers, county agencies and other private or nonprofit agencies to improve the outcomes for high-need applicants who may be homeless, imprisoned, individuals with

severe or persistent physical or mental health conditions and those uninsured or underinsured. They provide claim specific training to outside agencies and representatives to improve screening and develop a better understanding of the disability claim process."

In this issue, we are going to explore some secrets of success from this unit as well as other nuts and bolts on the art and the science of partnership, working to make great things happen in the lives of our participants. You will find out about CareerConnect, a resource matching same-disability learners and experts. You'll learn about making a boat float with Project SEARCH, as well as finding timely updates on health care information important to consumers. And of course, we know you are looking forward to a continuation of our chat with Katie Karwatske & Tanya Lewinski, back by popular demand.

## **Disability Community Opportunities and Announcements**

### **Free support and training from Microsoft**

Microsoft has started a free program for people with disabilities through which technicians access computers in need of repair to fix what they can remotely. The service number is 800-936-5900. For more information such as calling hours see: <http://support.microsoft.com/gp/contact-microsoft-accessibility>

Microsoft users, now eligible for free Window-Eyes screen reading software (see last issue), may want to access this online training

providing an introduction to working with Word 2013 and Window-Eyes. An audio recording, a study guide, worksheets and hot key reference document are archived at: Heading "Working with Word 2013 and Window-Eyes: Part 1." [http://www.gwmicro.com/Training/Webinar\\_Training/](http://www.gwmicro.com/Training/Webinar_Training/).

## Happy Tax Season!

Another tax season is at our door! The links below provide information about the online tax products and services available through the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for taxpayers with disabilities. Download hundreds of the most popular federal tax forms and publications at the IRS Accessibility page <http://www.irs.gov/uac/IRS.gov-Accessibility>.

Among other options, readers may choose from accessible PDFs and HTML formats to e-Braille. The following video introduces you to products and services available for people with disabilities; you can browse the American Sign Language videos with the latest federal tax information for disabled veterans, and more. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elxueE-ZDY&list=PL634968897EAEA4FD&index=3>

The IRS recommends checking its website often, since it is continually increasing products for persons with disabilities. For access questions, the IRS contact is Maureen Goulder, Chief, Alternative Media Center 804-916-8850. <mailto:maureen.p.goulder@irs.gov%3E>

Taxpayers who qualify can get free tax preparation help from the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs. <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Free-Tax-Return-Preparation-for-You-by-Volunteers>

The VITA Program offers free tax help to people who make \$52,000 or less per year and need help preparing their taxes. The TCE Program offers free tax help for all, with priority assistance for people age 60 and older.

Find a VITA site: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Tax-Counseling-for-the-Elderly>

Find a TCE site: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find-a-Location-for-Free-Tax-Prep>

Learn more about Child Tax Credit or the Credit for being Elderly or Disabled: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/EITC-Home-Page--It's-easier-than-ever-to-find-out-if-you-qualify-for-EITC>

## AFB CareerConnect®: What's in it for Consumers, Mentors, Rehabilitation Professionals & Teachers?

By Detra Bannister

**Editor's note:** For 12 years, Detra Bannister has worked as an Employment Specialist with the American Foundation for the Blind, a national nonprofit organization serving the blindness/low vision community and professionals in the field. She introduces us here to a national resource and networking program of interest to anyone working with low-vision or blind participants, and also of thought value for those without such participants. Detra plays a key role in helping to develop and maintain this program.

*AFB CareerConnect®* is a one-of-a-kind online interactive employment resource developed by The American Foundation for the Blind that is free to all users. This program offers *employment information, career exploration tools, extensive job seeking guidance* and dialogue with *mentors*.

You will appreciate access through CareerConnect to an extensive variety of fully accessible employment and portfolio-building tools and exercises that will support both you and your consumers during their job search or educational planning. A range of articles and many other resources are available to anyone interested. Though these tools were developed with job seekers and students with vision loss in mind, especially those in transition, many have universal application in the disability VR field.

### Some AFB CareerConnect highlights:

- *Employment* and *job search* information developed specifically for the visually impaired job seeker;
- Tools for new job seekers and students to *explore careers* and *find mentors* along their educational or career path;

- Lesson plans and activities to enhance career education;
- Support to professionals and new job seekers seeking advice about *interviewing skills*, resume building, *disability disclosure*, or other topics related to a successful job search;
- An array of jobs in over 300 occupational fields by successful professionals who are blind or visually impaired.

### Special Interactive Items of Interest on CareerConnect

- The Job Seekers Toolkit: a free self-paced course that can be assigned and in which you can monitor your student's progress;
- Nearly one hundred firsthand accounts from the many mentors of CareerConnect about working in fields from Art & Entertainment to Healthcare to the STEM fields;
- Online workstation including resume builder, private message board, calendar, etc;
- Edutainment video series sure to capture the humor and attention of youth – Please see *Aaron's Adventures in Employment*.

To take full advantage of these resources, you will need to *set up a free My CareerConnect account*. Employment materials such as resume, calendar, mentor and message board connections will be saved to your account, accessible wherever you have an Internet connection.

### \*The Importance of Mentoring

AFB CareerConnect® mentors share a wealth of knowledge and first-hand experience of benefit to blind or visually impaired students/job-seekers as they search out their own personal career paths. In the next issue of *HireGround*, read how these mentors share their expertise and how they can help your participants dodge pitfalls as they map their way to successful employment.

For questions, feel free to contact AFB CareerConnect:

Web: [www.afb.org/careerconnect.org](http://www.afb.org/careerconnect.org)

Email: [careerconnect@afb.net](mailto:careerconnect@afb.net)

Toll Free: 888. 824. 2184

## Social Security Spotlight: 7D Partnering to Track Allusive Quarry

By Elizabeth L. Sammons

When Social Security field offices began flagging claims arriving at OOD's Disability Determination Department (DDD) for certain variables, a workgroup of several volunteers offered to take on some particularly challenging cases. That's how DDD's Unit 7D sprang into action in 2009, and that can-do spirit is what helped the unit win its Excellence in Service award this February. The unit's work includes high-need populations such as people who are homeless, those with severe and persistent physical or mental health conditions, and people who are uninsured or under-insured and hospitalized due to a severe physical or mental impairment. Hospital pre-release projects are designed to secure benefits before the patient is released, thus reducing risks for rehospitalization. Similarly, the Prison pre-release projects Unit 7D handles are intended to secure benefits before the prisoner is released, thus reducing the risks for recidivism. An allowance can pave the way for success and access to other community programs.

Jennifer Popp and Shannon Hopp, both Disability Claims Adjudicators 3, and original team members, shared some special partnering techniques and rewards. "It's so hard to keep track of people when they're homeless or challenged by the system or fall through the cracks," Jennifer explains. "When the cycle is broken, it's just fulfilling to get the people who need it most expedited through."

Unit 7D partners closely with third-party contacts whenever possible, whether this means finding someone from the Benefits Bank, a parole officer, a shelter manager, an involved relative or a case worker from a hospital or another agency. The Supervisor and ten adjudicators assist these outside agencies and authorized representatives to find ways to better screen in appropriate cases and provide information to assist in making determinations. Such third-party contacts often have access to medical records critical in these cases, and if

they don't, they frequently assist in getting the information needed to make a fair decision. Individual adjudicators are linked one-on-one with high-volume centers such as the YMCA or JFS so that relationships can be forged with specific point people. Through giving ongoing feedback on the information the authorized representatives provide, the adjudicators are able to expedite these cases. "Once they get it, they get it, and it streamlines things," Shannon says.



DDD's Unit 7D

Every claim receives an individual bar code for submitting medical records and functional information specific to the claimant. When submitted using this barcode, the medical evidence is channeled into the individual's case via the electronic folder. If consultative exams are still needed, the third party works with the 7D adjudicators in contacting the claimant and sometimes even in providing transportation the person needs to get to evaluations, since the simple lack of medical information is a frequent cause for denials.

The toughest claims involve people who disappear and sometimes cannot be traced. "Suzie" for example, was in a Columbus shelter, but when her time expired there, she somehow got to another Ohio city. She reported in at a free store, whose manager contacted the 7D adjudicator but did not know Suzie's destination. When Suzie again reported in at a Social Security office, the claims representative there provided a phone number for Suzie's brother to serve as an additional contact. Only after this brother was unable to locate Suzie was this claim closed for lack of medical evidence.

The authorized representative can be an essential link to the claimant, especially when

the claimant does not have a permanent address or moves frequently. That is why the willingness to serve as contact from counselors and other VR staff using the Benefits Bank can expedite disability claims. With releases, <http://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/eAuthorization.htm>, it is appropriate to convey medical information to DDD adjudicators whenever needed. The more third-party mailing addresses and phone numbers are available for elusive claimants, the better. Additionally, while Social Security policy disallows using email as a means of contact, this is a critical link to many displaced claimants who use library computers. "Encouraging people to check back in" is also one of the best practices for keeping in touch, Jennifer says. This can be as simple as requesting a call, an email or a visit in a few weeks as follow-up, especially when the claimant has no fixed address.

Once a claim leaves DDD, it returns to the Social Security Administration Field Office for final processing. In most cases that is all the adjudicator knows. In Unit 7d, however, thanks to ongoing relationships with third-party colleagues, sometimes adjudicators hear the rest of the story. Shannon recounts how one case worker bought happy meals for the two children of a mother when sharing the news that she had been awarded SSI, thus allowing her the opportunity for a place to live, Medicaid and treatment she was sorely lacking. "That's the kind of thing that sustains us."

"You're helping them step back from the brink," Jennifer adds. "And working in this unit, you're a little bit more aware that their situation is different than most."

### Sidebar: Some Emergency Resources

This website allows searching for homeless shelters by city. <http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/ohio.html>

This online resource from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) lists mental health treatment facilities and programs nationwide, including for low-income clients. <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MHTreatmentLocator/faces/geographicSearch.jspx>

Ohio Benefits Bank Quick Check offers a basic assessment of most likely health insurance options. It helps decide which form to use to apply, plus a screening service for other federal and state benefits. <http://www.thebenefitbank.org/QuickCheck>

Please note that only certain entities can do a social security application. Typically, these include a social service agency or homeless shelters.

See this link for a comprehensive listing of Ohio 2-1-1 Community emergency and other Resource Directories. <http://www.referweb.net/ohio/>

### **Partner Spotlight: “We can do more!” Upper Valley Project SEARCH Rocks the Boat**

When Patti Moore began her job as the Upper Valley Project SEARCH Coordinator four years ago, she didn't expect to witness co-workers, interns, and SEARCH program partners overcoming fears of paddling on the Great Miami River in a ten passenger canoe, but that's how it turned out. “This was all made possible by each partner ‘jumping in the boat’ to create a life-changing event”, she says, tipping her oar to partners, the Upper Valley Career Center, Upper Valley Medical Center, Boards of Developmental Disabilities in Miami and Shelby counties, OOD and Capabilities Inc.

Pioneered in Cincinnati 15 years ago, Project SEARCH has 275 programs in the US and internationally, including 37 around Ohio. Upper Valley Project SEARCH involves Upper Valley Medical Center of Troy, Ohio hospital and other partners to involve post-high-school students in an intensive one-year internship and job search. Interns enjoy a 65-70% successful closure rate by the end of this work year. The opportunity provides valuable information for OOD counselors, job coaches and job developers, who assist in launching the interns in different hospital rotations and narrowing potential local application sites. “We have a license with this program to play on one great big team and accomplish our goals,” Patti says.

Socialization with peers and work professionals is an element Patti sees as key to the program's success. One example involves dining facilities where staff at all levels rub elbows with the 11 young people. Additionally, business partners become aware of interns' abilities as they work side by side. “We can do more,” Patti emphasized several times during our interview. “They just need to see that in what we do.”



*Job coaches, hospital staff and interns from Miami and Shelby Counties find themselves all in the same boat.*

The journey on the wild side began with all 11 interns participating in an outdoor leadership and team building program last October between their first and second work rotations. Wilderness Inquiry Canoe Mobile program is a nonprofit organization that provides all people access to the outdoors. Upper Valley Project SEARCH was one of only three in the USA that received the Mitsubishi Electric grant funding to create an adventure preparation in the Fall, with an overnight camping experience coming in April.

The Project SEARCH interns received employment-related skills from this opportunity such as interviewing, dealing with others, team building, mobility, and defining/overcoming fears while making life choices such as healthier meal selections. Activities included tent set up and tear down, a trust fall exercise, healthy meal projects, and making the day soda-free.

“These activities empowered the interns to problem solve, define personal space and



*Setting up a tent is hard work but worth the effort!*

develop a real sense of 'what they bring to the table,'" Patti says. "The Wilderness Inquiry program went beyond my expectations for interns to be empowered. I love my job, and desire that each person with a disability has the same opportunity to discover what they are born to do," she said. "This 'wilderness experience' has opened doors, empowered these interns, and has made a lasting impression that is affecting their personal career journey."

To investigate Project SEARCH programs near you on behalf of potential interns ages 18-22 who have earned their high school diploma or G.E.D., see [www.projectsearch.us/](http://www.projectsearch.us/).

## **Wisdom from the Desk of James Gears**

OOD's VR Fee Schedule was approved in the March 17th Joint Committee on Administrative Rule Review (JCARR) and will be effective April 1, 2014. We will be updating the VR Provider Manual to reflect the changes and to provide clarification and guidance. You will find it on OOD's website, [www.ood.ohio.gov](http://www.ood.ohio.gov) under the Partners & Providers tab.



*James Gears*

Now that the Fee Schedule has been adopted, OOD will begin looking at changing report templates. A GoToMeeting will be scheduled for April 21st to discuss potential changes, links and details to come. If you cannot attend, you may submit comments to [crpvendor@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:crpvendor@ood.ohio.gov); please use the SUBJECT LINE: REPORT TEMPLATES.

While most revisions simply clarify language, the following three changes are significant for certain services. To note:

- **Report Fee:** Most services will go to a \$50 flat report fee. Community Based Assessment, Work Adjustment, and Job Coaching will be paid at a \$75 flat report fee.
- **Summer Youth Experiences:** The Fee Schedule creates two tracks, Career Exploration and Work Adjustment. 14 and 15-year-olds students will participate in Career Exploration, and older students will participate in Work Experiences; however, the age recommendations have some flexibility on an individual needs basis.
- **Vocational Testing:** OOD set a standard rate of \$925 for vocational evaluations, which include service, research, the report fee, and a staffing. OOD has maintained the VT UOS rate for the purpose of consultations and clerical skills evaluation. Clerical skills evaluations are recommended to run 3 – 5 hours and are meant to verify current knowledge. Consumers exploring the clerical field should use the flat vocational evaluation fee.

You may also notice some new service codes:

- Community Based Assessment – Site Development (\$7.00 UOS)
- Work Adjustment – Site Development (\$7.00 UOS)
- Drug Screen/Test (No established rate)
- Vocational Evaluation (Flat Fee \$925)
- Summer Youth Work Experience (\$510/Week for Group; \$1,020/Week for Individual)
- Summer Youth Career Exploration (\$382.50/Week for Group; \$765 for Individual)
- Finally, "Report Writing" has changed to "Report Fee"

## Perspectives from the Field: How Katie Karwatske & Tanya Lewinski Are “Takin’ Care of Business” Part II

Editor’s note: When OOD customer surveys were sent out last year, both OOD counselor Katie Karwatske and VRP3 Coordinator Tanya Lewinski received 100% satisfaction scores from participants. In Part II of this Q&A, Here’s more of what Katie and Tanya have to say about streamlining the VR process and reaching successful outcomes.

**HG (HireGround):** Before, we were talking a lot about respecting consumers and really hearing what they want. What if you had a BSVI consumer who wanted to be a pilot?

**TL (Tanya Lewinski):** We use a lot of labor market statistics <http://ohiolmi.com/> for cases like that. There aren’t a lot of pilot jobs out there. I say, ‘I really want to make sure you can succeed. Let’s look at your limitations and how they come across... what your job duties are... this



*Tanya Lewinski*

is the reality of the job. Do you think you’re capable of doing all those things, or would you be more successful in a different field?’ You lay out the whole picture of being a pilot to the consumer, and that really helps them to realize.

**KK (Katie Karwatske):** Any time that I suspect that I can’t support a goal, I always try to let them know first that ultimately, we are on the same team, that I share their goals in the sense of getting them competitively employed, before I have to tell them something that they might not want to hear.

**HG:** What are your thoughts on the goals of time and cost and success outcomes of cases OOD is focusing on now?

**KK:** The last few years, we’ve been in economic hard times, and we’re focusing on a population that probably requires more time and more expenditure. I’m planning to share more of these goals up front with the consumers to have them be very invested in the process. This agency



*Katie Karwatske*

is making an investment so that they know ‘Hey, I have a stake in this.’ I know you’re not supposed to take the job home, but we notice ‘HELP WANTED’ signs. We notice what people are doing when they’re working and we take that back. If there is a job that I see someone doing, and I think ‘I have a consumer who could do that’ even if there isn’t an opening, at least, I have a direction.

**TL:** Sometimes people with disabilities have depended on other people for a lot of their life. The reality is, the consumer is ultimately responsible for finding a job; it’s just that we’re helping them. I ask myself ‘Am I utilizing the resources in the community and giving those resources to the consumer?’ It could be county one-stops or the school. For me, that’s cost cutting, if you can find a comparable benefit that the consumer will latch on to. With transition youth, I ask them ‘Where do your friends work? What kind of jobs are your friends getting? What kind of successes have you seen?’

**HG:** Let’s talk a little more about this teamwork.

**TL:** Teamwork is tough, because everyone has to come together and aim for the same direction; that’s always my goal. We are someone new coming in and saying ‘OK, if you want to get employed, here’s the route you need to go.’ But Katie and I need to be 100% sure that those services that we agree to are necessary, and they’re going to lead to a job. In some ways, we are persuading the people on the team to trust us and kind of lead them.

**KK:** Since I am an embedded counselor, I often can get a better sense of the other programs. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) workers become my pseudo-coworkers. I don't get to see my OOD teams but a couple of times a month. The folks I share a hallway and a breakroom and the microwave with all work for ODJFS. One advantage is, if they have funding for a program, or they are looking for referrals, or they have some kind of employer connection in the community, that is often something that they can share with me. They see my face. They know what I do. So if they have someone in their office with a disability, they will often just walk down the hall and say 'Do you have a few minutes?' I get a lot of spontaneous referrals that way, not even folks that are seeking our agency out.

**HG:** But will this still be a shared process?

**KK:** It depends. Sometimes the person did not qualify for the ODJFS part. However, often we work together. Someone who has been laid off can be using unemployment, WIA dollars to get a two-year training, and they could also be using our program.

## **Insights from the desk of Steve Tribbie: Unallowable Costs**

Federal cost principles encourage the use of funds to pay for a wide variety of expenses related to delivering services to people with disabilities. However, there are some costs that are just not allowed under contracts supported by federal funds. For example, under no circumstances is it permissible to charge the cost of alcohol to a federally funded contract, nor can funds be used to pay for entertainment or interest charges on a credit card bill. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) includes lists of unallowable costs to help guide federal fund



*Steve Tribbie*

recipients. Partners are strongly encouraged to become familiar with these cost principles so that they may remain in compliance with all of the rules and regulations. The cost principles can be found at the following sources:

- 2 CFR Part 220 (formerly OMB Circular A-21) – Educational Institutions [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/fedreg/2005/083105\\_a21.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/fedreg/2005/083105_a21.pdf)
- 2 CFR Part 225 (formerly OMB Circular A-87) – State and Local Governments [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/fedreg/2005/083105\\_a87.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/fedreg/2005/083105_a87.pdf)
- 2 CFR Part 230 (formerly OMB Circular A-122) – Non-Profit Organizations [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/fedreg/2005/083105\\_a122.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/fedreg/2005/083105_a122.pdf)

## **Medicare/Medicaid Updates**

### **MyCare Ohio Implementation to Begin in May**

The MyCare Ohio project, (previously known as the Integrated Care Delivery System,) is now slated to begin individual enrollment in May with a regional roll-out over the following months. Ohio was only the third state to reach an agreement with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on this initiative, to better coordinate care for individuals eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. MyCare Ohio is a system of managed care plans selected to coordinate physical, behavioral and long-term care services for adults eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare, including people with disabilities, older adults and individuals who receive behavioral health services.

Ohioans in 29 pilot counties will enroll in a MyCare Ohio plan for Medicaid services based on their regional enrollment dates in May, June, and July. Medicare services will be added to the MyCare Ohio plan benefits beginning in January 2015, or earlier if the adult so chooses. Individuals can also choose to opt out. To read more on MyCare Ohio: <http://www.healthtransformation.ohio.gov/CurrentInitiatives/IntegrateMedicareMedicaidbenefits.aspx>

## See also:

Long Term Services and Supports – New Report Provides Overview of Ongoing Work to Improve Care for Dual Eligibles:

<http://www.cms.gov/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination/Medicare-and-Medicaid-Coordination/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination-Office/index.html>

In the report, the Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO) made these three recommendations to Congress:

- Streamline the appeals mechanisms available to beneficiaries through health plans and other qualified entities offering Medicare and Medicaid services;
- Improve access to needed prescription drugs for Medicare-Medicaid enrollees by making the LI NET demonstration permanent; and
- Develop a pilot for the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) Eligibility for individuals between Ages 21 and 55.

In the report, MMCO identified two areas for further exploration that it believes may have potential to improve the experience of Medicare-Medicaid enrollees:

- Coverage standards for Medicare-Medicaid enrollees; and
- Cost-sharing rules for Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries (QMBs).

(Summary courtesy of The Capitol Insider for the Week of March 18)

## Medicare and the Health Care Exchange:

Many consumers still have questions about Medicare and the Exchange created by the new health care law. Enrollment under the federal health insurance marketplace (Affordable Care Act) rose more than 30 percent in February for Ohio. As of March, more than 54,000 Ohioans have signed up for the expanded Medicaid program. That's about 15 percent of the roughly 366,000 people the state projected would be newly eligible for Medicaid expansion by June 2015 (not including aged/blind/disabled claimants). To learn more about the updated enrollment numbers on a national basis, see <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2014pres/03/20140311a.html>.

Here's a brief Q&A courtesy of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid via [Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program \(OSHIIP\)](#)

### **Q: If I have Medicare, do I need to do anything?**

**A:** No. If you have Medicare, you are covered and you don't need to do anything about the Exchange. The Exchange won't affect your Medicare choices, benefits, or how much you pay. No matter how you get Medicare, whether through Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO), you won't have to make any changes because of the Exchange.

Note: The Exchange doesn't offer Medicare Supplement Insurance (called Medigap or MedSup) policies, Medicare health plans, or Medicare prescription drug plans (Part D).

### **Q: Can I get an Exchange plan in addition to Medicare?**

**A:** No. It's against the law for someone who knows that you have Medicare to sell you an Exchange plan. This is true even if you have Medicare Part A only or Medicare Part B only.

### **Q: What if I become eligible for Medicare after I join an Exchange plan?**

**A:** You can have an Exchange plan before your Medicare begins. You can cancel the Exchange plan when your Medicare coverage starts. When you are eligible for Medicare, you will have an initial enrollment period to sign up. In most cases it is to your advantage to sign up when you are first eligible because:

- When you are considered eligible for Medicare Part A, you won't qualify for Exchange tax credits to help pay your premiums or reductions in cost-sharing that may be available; and
- If you enroll in Medicare after your initial enrollment period ends, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty for as long as you have Medicare.

Note: You can keep your Exchange plan after your Medicare coverage starts. But once Part A coverage starts, any premium tax credits and reduced cost-sharing you get through the Exchange will stop.

For more information, visit [www.HealthCare.gov](http://www.HealthCare.gov)

## At Your Fingertips: (A Few Additional Resources and Features)

### Labor Market Information (LMI Spotlight: Help Wanted online datafeature)

<http://ohiolmi.com/asp/omj/hw.htm>

This page displays a box with three selection steps. At the top, select the area for the report: Ohio or one of the six JobsOhio regions.

In the middle section are three radio buttons for different types of reports.

The top button provides an overview of the month's activities. It is labeled "snapshot."

The second button allows "Occupations by HWOL Ad Demand."

The third button represents internships.

At the bottom of the box you will find a button labeled "View Report." This takes you to another page with links to individual reports by year and month.

The federal government has just approved a revised form for voluntary self-identification of disability by applicants and employees with disabilities who work for organizations covered by Section 503 regulations. It also includes a reasonable accommodation notice and provides examples. This form includes the language for federal contractors to request applicants or employees to voluntarily self-disclose as a person with a disability.

<http://1.usa.gov/1mQCfWz>

This federal search tool covers currently-enrolled employers and federal contractors in E-Verify (who are thus subject to the new 503 regulations).

<http://www.uscis.gov/e-verify/about-program/e-verify-employers-search-tool>

Click here for information on the new Section 503 regulations <<http://bit.ly/1jbkqRD>>, or visit [www.askearn.org](http://www.askearn.org) <<http://bit.ly/ijCRvC>> for additional information and resources.

See •Tips for Applying for DOT Jobs Non-Competitively as a Person with a Severe Disability •Sample Schedule A Letters •Writing

online readings and other resources. <http://disabilitymediaadvocacy.wordpress.com/>

Listing of Ohio job fairs & workshops; basic computer skills; resume writing; money management, much more. <https://ohiomeansjobs.com/omj/workshoplister.do?selectId=0>

## Calendar of Disability Community Events

April 7-9 - **AUCD's Annual Disability Policy seminar**, Washington, D.C., <http://www.disabilitypolicyseminar.org/>

April 8-9: **Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) Spring Conference**, Embassy Suites Hotel, Dublin, OH. Subjects are geared to Ohio's statewide community of service providers. [www.opra.org](http://www.opra.org)

April 9-13: **Council for Exceptional Children Annual Convention and Exposition**, Philadelphia, PA, <http://www.cec.sped.org>

April 16-17: **Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion & Disability conference**, OSU Columbus Campus, Columbus, OH, <http://ada.osu.edu/conferences.htm>

May 22-23: **Ohio Association of County Boards OACB Spring Conference**, Hilton Columbus at Polaris, Columbus, OH

More information at [www.oacbdd.org](http://www.oacbdd.org).

May 2: **Nisonger Institute 2014, Disability & Health**, Blackwell Center, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH. Particular focus on pediatrics and on emergency preparedness. For registration, parking, and directions: [www.nisonger.osu.edu/ni2014](http://www.nisonger.osu.edu/ni2014)

May 13-16: **8th Annual Capacity Building Institute for interdisciplinary state teams, improving outcomes for students with disabilities**, Hilton Charlotte University Place, Charlotte, NC, <http://www.nsttac.org/>

June 9-10: **3rd annual M-Enabling Summit**, global conference and showcase dedicated to accessible and assistive mobile solutions for seniors and users of all abilities, Washington, D.C., [http://uscd.org/detail/event.cfm?event\\_id=388&id=182](http://uscd.org/detail/event.cfm?event_id=388&id=182)

June 23-26: **American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 138th Annual Meeting**, Orlando, FL, <http://aaid.org/education/annual-conference>

June 30 – July 1: **Ohio's 5th annual Opiate Conference: "Don't Get Me Started,"** Hyatt Regency, Columbus, OH, [http://www.oacbha.org/ohios\\_2014\\_opiate\\_conference.php](http://www.oacbha.org/ohios_2014_opiate_conference.php)

July 1-5: **52nd Conference, National Association of the Deaf**, Atlanta, GA <http://new.nad.org/>

July 1-6: **National Federation of the Blind annual convention**, Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, FL, <https://nfb.org/national-convention>

July 11-19: **American Council of the Blind national conference**, Riviera Casino and Hotel, Las Vegas, NV, <http://acb.org/node/1487>

July 14–19: **AHEAD: Association on Higher Education and Disability annual conference, "Access Always In All Ways,"** Sacramento, CA, <http://ahead.org/meet/conferences/2014>

September 9: **Web Accessibility Day**, National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute, Baltimore, MD, <https://nfb.org/web-accessibility-day>

September 16-17, **Call for Presenters' due April 18: Ohio's 12th Annual MI/DD Conference sponsored by NADD (formerly the National Association for Dual Diagnosis)**, Crowne Plaza Columbus North, Columbus, OH, <http://thenadd.org/> Potential presenters, see <http://thenadd.org/cfp-ohio/>

September 30-October 2: **The Arc's 2014 National Convention**, New Orleans, LA, <http://convention.thearc.org/page.aspx?pid=3975>

November 6-8: **proposals due April 30 for Division on Career Development and Transition annual International Conference "Transition Rocks!,"** Renaissance Cleveland, Cleveland, OH. For updated conference information, see [www.dcdt.org](http://www.dcdt.org)

November 20-21: **CONFERENCE ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**, Hyatt Fairfax at Fair Lakes in Fairfax, Virginia. Until website is open for registration in April, contact [hgraff@gmu.edu](mailto:hgraff@gmu.edu) for questions.

## Thanks and so long for now

I want to thank each person interviewed for these articles, all of whom voluntarily gave of their time and wisdom. For any comments, future article suggestions, announcements, etc., please contact me by email at [Elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov).

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