

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

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Health and Human Services Briefs

Foodbank Association Decries Farm Bill: The Ohio Association of Foodbanks Executive Director Joree Novotny said in a [statement](#) that modest increase to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the 2024 Farm Bill were undercut by a provision that would "erode investments in SNAP and other emergency food assistance programs overtime."

The U.S. [House Agriculture](#) Committee recently passed its Farm, Food and National Security Act of 2024, which now awaits a floor vote.

"Ohio's families and local economies have already absorbed a loss of about \$126 million per month in federally funded SNAP benefits in the wake of the pandemic," Novotny said "Unfortunately, rather than fully funding access to an adequate, wholesome diet, the House Agriculture Committee's bill language would mean less purchasing power for groceries, as well as reduced investments in The Emergency Food Assistance Program over time."

It also does not include funding for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program, restricts the USDA's ability to direct for TEFAP foods to foodbanks, fails to permanently authorize replacement SNAP benefits and includes "harmful" changes to SNAP administration, she said.

Working Age Death Trends: A new [analysis](#) from the Health Policy Institute of Ohio found Ohioans age 15-64 are dying at a much higher rate compared to 15 years ago.

Four factors driving the trend are addiction and overdose, alcohol overuse, tobacco use and violence/firearms.

"The biggest increases in the leading causes of death for Ohioans ages 15-64 are in unintentional injuries (including overdose deaths), chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, homicide, suicide and chronic lower respiratory diseases," the brief states. "The experiences and environments driving these trends can be exacerbated by systemic challenges, including a lack of economic opportunity and experiences of discrimination."

Youth Suicide Prevention: The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Youth Poisoning Protection Act, a bill co-sponsored by [U.S. Rep. Mike Carey](#) (R-Columbus) that was partially inspired by the 2020 death of Hilliard 16-year-old Kristine Jonsson.

According to a [statement](#) from Carey, Jonsson's death is part of a trend of people learning about and accessing highly lethal sodium nitrate, which is used to preserve meat and fish but when consumed can be 100 times more deadly than other poisons.

[U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance](#) (R-Cincinnati) is carrying a companion bill with Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.).

Psychiatric Hospitals: The [Governor's Work Group on Competency Restoration and Diversion](#) is now halfway through its scheduled meetings aimed at addressing the increased number of criminal justice-involved patients at the state's six regional psychiatric hospitals.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 6, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Department of Public Safety.

Cannabis: The Division of Cannabis Control reported that as of Tuesday there were 428,682 medical marijuana patients, including 24,690 with veteran status, 25,624 with indigent status and 1,459 with a terminal diagnosis.

As of Tuesday, 409,924 unique patients purchased medical marijuana and there were 36,609 registered care givers.

Sales figures as of Monday showed:

- 261,705 lbs. of plant material.
- 23,772,822 units of manufactured product.
- \$1.82 billion in product sales.
- 15,315,416 total receipts.
- Plant sales average - \$18.19 per 1/10oz.
- Plant sales average - \$6.43 per gram.
- Manufactured sales average - \$26.90 per unit.