

For Immediate Release

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SEHCB ANNOUNCES FIRST SET OF HEALTHCARE BEST PRACTICES

Columbus, OH – March 19, 2008 - The School Employees Health Care Board today announced the first set of best practices to be adopted by all health care plans providing coverage to public school employees and their families.

The Board was created by the legislature in 2005 to help school boards throughout the state improve the benefits and health status of their employees. With the assistance of an advisory committee composed of 18 members from nine constituent groups, the Board is empowered to establish best practice standards designed to lower healthcare expenditures without reducing benefit levels or shifting costs.

The first set of best practices requires that all health care plans providing coverage to public school employees and their families institute disease state management, implement wellness programs, provide access to specialty and transplant networks, and conduct periodic dependent eligibility audits. Dr. Stephen F. Loeb, Professor Emeritus at Ohio State's Division of Health Services Management & Policy and Chair of the School Employees Health Care Board, described the best practices adopted by the Board as "a critical first step in helping Ohio's public schools both contain healthcare costs and improve the health of their employees."

Scott DiMauro, a Board member and teacher in the Worthington public school system, agreed with Dr. Loeb. "Everyone understands the importance of controlling healthcare costs. The Board has worked very hard to identify and adopt meaningful, evidence-based best practices that will address spiraling premiums and out of pocket expenses."

The proposed best practices are expected to be considered for formal adoption by the Board at its April meeting. Once adopted, the best practices will go through the state's rulemaking process and are expected to become law sometime in the fall.

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