



OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Charles Dobson

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: H.B. 587 of the 132nd G.A.

Status: As Introduced

Sponsor: Reps. Anielski and Kick

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Subject: Require Medicaid to cover white canes for visually impaired recipients

State Fiscal Highlights

- Medicaid costs could increase by up to about \$365,000 per year to provide a white cane, as well as evaluation management and skilled therapy sessions, to all 8,000 recipients with vision impairments every three years. The federal government typically reimburses about 63% of these costs.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill requires the Medicaid Program to cover white canes as part of its coverage of durable medical equipment. According to the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM), approximately 8,000 Medicaid recipients have vision impairments, of which roughly 1,800 recipients are categorized as blind. Costs to provide white canes for this population could be up to about \$365,000 per year. Of this amount, the federal government would typically reimburse about 63% of the total cost.¹ This estimate assumes the following: (1) all Medicaid recipients with vision impairments will receive a new white cane through ODM once every three years, (2) the cost of the cane would be \$50,² (3) each recipient would receive an evaluation management session to assess the recipient's mobility and the appropriate cane type, length, etc. at a cost of approximately \$44, and (4) each recipient would receive two skilled therapy sessions with an orientation or mobility specialist at a cost of approximately \$44 (\$22 each session). Costs could be much lower depending on the number of individuals that receive a white cane, the type and price of the white cane and accessories provided, and

¹ The federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) rate, which varies by state and is determined by formula, is used to reimburse states the federal share of most Medicaid expenditures. However, there are exceptions to the FMAP rate for certain populations or services.

² Canes vary by price depending on type, material, length, accessories, and tips. Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities provides white canes to certain individuals enrolled on their Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Older Blind programs. According to ODM, the list prices are between \$17.95 and \$49.95 for most white canes provided under these programs. On Amazon, the costs for white canes were between \$14.99 and \$64.95.

utilization of the evaluation management and skilled therapy sessions. If other state or local programs currently provide white canes, there could be a shift in costs if individuals choose to receive canes under the Medicaid Program.