

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
0
1
2
3
4
5
6

Resolution No. 20 – 2023

Introduced by: OSMA Young Physicians Section

Subject: Moratorium on Utility Discontinuation in Pregnancy and 12 Months Postpartum

Referred to: Resolutions Committee No. 2

WHEREAS, Nearly 400,000 Ohioans had one or more utilities discontinued between June 2021 and June 2022¹; and

WHEREAS, Programs such as Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provides a once-per-season emergency payment for low-income people who are behind on utility bills²; and

WHEREAS, Programs such as percent of income payment plan (PIPP) helps eligible Ohioans manage their energy bills based on a percentage of household income and are consistent year-round ³; and

WHEREAS, The Ohio administrative code allows for medical waivers to prevent utility discontinuation in cases of nonpayment of utility bills when utilities are obtained through Public Utilities Commission (PUCO) regulated company ⁴; and

WHEREAS, Medical certifications for utility discontinuation can only be signed by a physician three times in a rolling 12-month period to avoid utility discontinuation for up to 30 days⁴; and

WHEREAS, Medical certifications can postpone a disconnection, but customers are still required to pay for the utilities, even for the period the medical certification is in effect⁴; and

WHEREAS, In a survey of underserved patients at an Ohio institution, greater than 50% faced difficulty paying their utility bills despite available services; and

WHEREAS, young children whose families struggle to pay their utility bills ('energy insecure' families) are more likely to suffer a host of problems including food insecurity, poor health, hospitalizations and development delays⁵; and

WHEREAS, the association between social determinants of health (SDOH) and adverse outcomes in pregnancies has been well-established⁶; and

47 **WHEREAS**, loss of power may result in an increase in co-sleeping which has
48 been associated with an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome; and NOW
49 THEREFORE

50
51 **BE IT RESOLVED**, That Ohio State Medical Association work with relevant
52 stakeholders to establish a moratorium on utility discontinuation during pregnancy and
53 in the first year of the infant's life in order to ensure optimal health for both individuals;
54 and be it further (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

55
56 **RESOLVED**, That Ohio State Medical Association support increasing education
57 about utilities payment plans available to at-need Ohioans that may be used to pay off
58 charges accrued while the medical certificate was in effect. (Directive to Take Action).

59
60
61 Fiscal Note: \$ (Sponsor)
62 \$ 10,000 (Staff)

63
64 **References:**

- 65
66 1. [https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2022/07/07/aep-cut-164000-ohioans-power-for-](https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2022/07/07/aep-cut-164000-ohioans-power-for-nonpayment-last-year-more-than-any-other-utility/)
67 nonpayment-last-year-more-than-any-other-utility/
68 2. [https://development.ohio.gov/individual/energy-assistance/1-home-energy-](https://development.ohio.gov/individual/energy-assistance/1-home-energy-assistance-program)
69 [assistance-program](https://development.ohio.gov/individual/energy-assistance/1-home-energy-assistance-program)
70 3. [3 https://development.ohio.gov/individual/energy-assistance/2-percentage-of-](https://development.ohio.gov/individual/energy-assistance/2-percentage-of-income-payment-plan-plus)
71 income-payment-plan-plus
72 4. <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-4901:1-18-06>
73 5. [https://childrenshealthwatch.org/energy-insecurity-is-a-major-threat-to-child-](https://childrenshealthwatch.org/energy-insecurity-is-a-major-threat-to-child-health/)
74 [health/](https://childrenshealthwatch.org/energy-insecurity-is-a-major-threat-to-child-health/)
75 6. Amjad S, MacDonald I, Chambers T, Osornio-Vargas A, Chandra S, Voaklander
76 D, Ospina MB. Social determinants of health and adverse maternal and birth
77 outcomes in adolescent pregnancies: A systematic review and meta-analysis.
78 Paediatr Perinat Epidemiol. 2019 Jan;33(1):88-99. doi: 10.1111/ppe.12529. Epub
79 2018 Dec 5. PMID: 30516287.