

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/prison-authorities-can-save-lives-and-taxpayer-funds-helping-people-leaving-jail>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

[Skip to main content](#)

CLEVELAND, OH Today, the ACLU of Ohio called on the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) to pass rules that help people leaving jail enroll in Ohio's newly expanded Medicaid program.

Helping people get the treatment they need to stay out of jail for good is a much better investment than incarcerating them over and over again," said ACLU of Ohio Policy Director Shakyra Diaz. People leave jail uninsured, unemployed, and struggling with substance abuse or mental illness. Without access to quality physical and mental healthcare, many will end up right back behind bars, at taxpayer expense.

Low-income, childless Ohioans who are younger than 65 and do not have a disability were not eligible for Medicaid in the past. Medicaid expansion in Ohio changed that. Now the federal government will pay 100 percent of the cost for these newly eligible enrollees until 2016, gradually decreasing the cost to 90 percent in 2020 and beyond.

Newly enrolled Ohioans will now find themselves covered for emergency care, mental health care, substance abuse or behavioral health treatment, and chronic disease management.

We cannot jail our way out of our problems, said Diaz. But with better access to the physical and mental healthcare they need, those who leave jail can get healthy, rebuild their lives, and stay out for good. Other states are already working to help this population enroll in Medicaid, because they know it will ultimately save both lives and taxpayer dollars.

For more information, visit www.acluohio.org/action/Medicaid.

Stay informed

2022 ACLU of Ohio