

# RMHC DAYTON MEDICAID FOR LODGING

## Case Study: Medicaid Coverage for Ronald McDonald House Lodging – Ensuring Access to Care for Ohio's Children

Ohio is home to six Ronald McDonald Houses across five chapters, each of which plays a vital role in supporting families during challenging times. Approximately 50% of children in Ohio have Medicaid coverage, making it a critical need to provide Medicaid-eligible pediatric patients and their families with access to lodging services during medical care, alleviating the financial burden they face.

LMK Advocacy embarked on a comprehensive advocacy campaign in collaboration with a coalition of Ronald McDonald Houses across Ohio. The primary goal was to establish and fund a new Medicaid Lodging Benefit, enabling Ronald McDonald Houses to bill for lodging services provided to support guest families. This initiative aimed to alleviate the financial burden on families with Medicaid coverage and keep them close to the medical care they needed during their child's treatment.

To advance this initiative, LMK Advocacy engaged heavily with the CEOs of all six Ronald McDonald Houses across Ohio. They played a pivotal role in advocating for this policy change to their respective state legislators. LMK Advocacy provided extensive training and material to educate the CEOs about how to effectively communicate the impact of the lodging benefit on Ohio families.

LMK Advocacy's comprehensive advocacy efforts included various activities in order to move this effort across the finish line. LMK Advocacy drafted talking points for CEOs to communicate the importance of the Medicaid Lodging Benefit to their legislators. We facilitated and participated in countless legislative meetings, both at their Statehouse offices and in their districts, advocating for the policy change with lawmakers. The advocacy team briefed legislative staff and met with high level legislative and administrative leadership to garner support.

Additionally, LMK Advocacy assisted Ronald McDonald House CEOs in engaging their boards and community advocates to garner support from various stakeholders. When legislators hear from leaders in their community about an issue, they pay attention. LMK Advocacy works to make sure those messages are delivered and received in a timely and effective manner.

LMK Advocacy's efforts culminated in the successful securing of a \$5 million appropriation in the FY24/FY25 Operating Budget, as well as the implementing language enabling the Ohio Department of Medicaid to provide this funding to the houses. This funding would support lodging for families with children who have special healthcare needs, ensuring they can stay close to their child's care facility during their medical journey.

The Medicaid Lodging Benefit is expected to have a profound impact on Ohio Medicaid families by providing better outcomes as access to lodging support can lead to improved outcomes for hospitalized children and their families. It will also provide reduced stress; studies show that Ronald McDonald Houses reduce parental stress, create cost savings, and alleviate the burden of hospital lodging. This benefit will also support positive hospital experiences--families that stayed at Ronald McDonald Houses reported a more positive overall hospital experience.

Ohio's pediatric hospitals are among the best in the country, but they may require families to travel long distances. The lodging benefit helps keep families together and close to the care they need.

LMK Advocacy effectively communicated to legislators that by supporting the lodging benefit, they were helping families stay together, well-rested, fed, and surrounded by love and support during difficult times. This was a meaningful way for the state to show its support for families with critically ill children when they needed it most. The successful advocacy campaign led by LMK Advocacy in partnership with Ronald McDonald Houses in Ohio demonstrates the power of strategic advocacy in creating meaningful policy changes that positively impact families and communities. The Medicaid Lodging Benefit ensures that families can access essential lodging services while their children receive medical care, ultimately leading to better outcomes and alleviating financial burdens during challenging times.