

Grand Rapids Area
Chamber of Commerce

August 4, 2009

The Honorable Andy Dillon
Michigan House of Representatives
Room 166, Capitol Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Speaker Dillon,

On behalf of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and our 3,000 members, we applaud your proposal to reform public sector health care by consolidating the planning, delivery and administration of benefits and standardizing coverage. Given the fiscal and economic problems facing the state, this is the kind of structural change we need and it deserves serious consideration.

Aligning the benefits of public workers more closely with the realities experienced in the private sector has been one of the Chamber's long-standing priorities in setting a path toward sustainable government budgets at all levels.

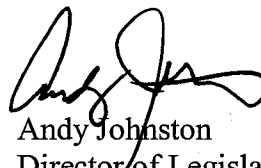
As your policy paper points out, public sector employees in Michigan pay a smaller share of health care premiums than the national average for public employees and in Michigan's private sector. While public employees should have good health care coverage, it is important for all consumers to share a significant cost of insurance premiums.

Not only is this fair to taxpayers, it is essential in educating users of the cost of services, thereby helping to control utilization. Cost-sharing and increased personal responsibility are realities employers and employees of all types must accept.

Thank you for putting forth this proposal. It is an important step in the right direction. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (616) 771-0300 if we can ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,


Jeanne A. Englehart
President & CEO


Andy Johnston
Director of Legislative Affairs

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