Michigan Chamber of Commerce Supports Commonsense Medicaid Work Search Requirements

LANSING, Mich., April 18, 2018 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today applauded the Senate Competitiveness Committee's vote on key legislation to promote independence among healthy, adult Medicaid recipients by requiring them to find work or engage in job training or educational opportunities as a condition of receiving benefits. Currently, half of healthy adults on Medicaid are not working.

"The Michigan Chamber supports this commonsense legislation," saidWendy Block, Senior Director of Health Policy, Human Resources & Business Advocacy for the Michigan Chamber. "Michigan is currently experiencing a workforce shortage and talent gap and estimates suggest that as many as 100,000 jobs are currently unfilled."

"The Chamber believes Medicaid work requirements, modeled after what has been required under the Unemployment Insurance system since the 1930s, could help employers with their labor shortages and create a pathway for independence for enrollees," Block added.

"Michigan's Medicaid Expansion program, otherwise known as 'Healthy Michigan,' is over-enrolled and under-funded," noted Michigan Chamber President & CEO Rich Studley. "When the program was initially expanded, job providers were specifically promised the program would reduce uncompensated care costs that would translate to premium savings for employers, emphasize healthy behaviors for enrollees and a set-aside of state funds to pay for the long-term costs associated with the program. To date, these promises have not been fulfilled."

"Employer support for Healthy Michigan could collapse without reforms like work requirements," added Studley. "Currently, our broken Medicaid system discourages work rather than promoting it."

"The Michigan Medicaid program offers some of the most generous health care benefits to enrollees at zero cost to enrollees entirely at taxpayer expense," Block said, who noted that Medicaid composes more than one-third of Michigan's budget. "Asking participants to join the labor market is a commonsense way to combat poverty and create opportunities for them to cycle off Medicaid and onto employer-sponsored insurance."

The Michigan Chamber is encouraging a prompt vote by theMichigan Senate and will be advocating that the Michigan House follow suit.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization representing approximately 6,200 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Chamber represents businesses of every size and type in all 83 counties of the state. Chamber member firms employ over one million Michigan residents. The Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process. It is one of only six state chambers accredited by the U.S. Chamber and one of only four state chambers accredited with distinction.

SOURCE Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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