Michigan Chamber Of Commerce Applauds House Passage Of Medicaid Reform Legislation

LANSING, Mich., June 14, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today applauded the bipartisan passage of legislation to reform Michigan's Medicaid program and provide insurance access to the uninsured. House Bill 4714, introduced by Representative Matt Lori (R-Constantine), passed the Michigan House yesterday, June 13th, by a vote of 76 to 31.

"We commend members of the State House from both sides of the aisle for working together to take action on a real solution to a real problem," said Michigan Chamber President & CEO Rich Studley. "We especially applaud the hard work of Representative Mike Shirkey (R-Clark Lake) in crafting a fiscally responsible solution to this tough issue – one that presents a real and unique opportunity to bend the overall health care cost curve and lessen the impact of Obamacare."

"Make no mistake: The Michigan Chamber remains strongly opposed to Obamacare," said Jim Holcomb, Senior Vice President and General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber. "However, our 83-member Board of Directors believes Medicaid reform makes sense for our state and the business community."

"Michigan's uninsured citizens are entitled to health care today," said Wendy Block, Director of Health Policy and Human Resources for the Michigan Chamber. "This access happens in our state's emergency rooms, which is the most costly and inefficient form of providing care.

"This delivery model results in uncompensated care costs being shifted from hospitals to insurers to private health insurance purchasers, including employers," continued Block. "Medicaid reform makes sound economic sense because it will ultimately reduce the uncompensated care costs shift and control the upward spiral of health insurance rates.

"Medicaid reform also will help employers control their costs under Obamacare," noted Block. "Without this legislation, Jackson-Hewitt suggests employers will pay $54-81 million in 'pay or play' penalties under Obamacare.

"In providing low wage workers coverage through Medicaid, Michigan employers will be able to avoid penalties of up to $3,000 per employee that would otherwise apply," Block concluded. "This is a key competitiveness issue for our state and we call on the Michigan Senate to take bold action on this proposal when they resume their work next week."

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization representing approximately 6,400 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber represents businesses of every size and type in all 83 counties of the state. Michigan Chamber member businesses provide jobs to 1.5 million residents. One of every 2.6 employees in Michigan works for a Chamber member firm. The Michigan 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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