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Group Blasts House Documents on Blues Bills

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A group that opposed legislation that would expand the ability of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan to write individual health insurance issued a scathing statement Thursday accusing a House work group of essentially accepting a BCBSM proposal as its proposed compromise on HB 5282 and HB 5283. The workgroup was essentially a sham, the Coalition for Access and Affordability in Michigan said.

But a spokesperson for BCBSM said the charges were essentially nonsense. Both BCBSM and outside groups were invited to make suggestions to the workgroup, said Helen Stojic.

The opposing organization made the comments after the House workgroup, formed to develop a compromise between the House and Senate versions of the bills, released a proposed compromise earlier this week and was going to hear from different groups about the proposal.

Denise DeCook, spokesperson for the CAAM, said that when the workgroup document was reviewed it was essentially a document drafted by the Blues.

J.P. Wieske, of CAAM, sent a letter to House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.) questioning whether it was ethical for BCBSM to write the proposal and whether members of the House knew that was underway.

Rep. Virgil Smith III (D-Detroit), a member of the workgroup, could not be reached for comment about the accusations.

Ms. DeCook said a preliminary response from the letter was that a number of House members did not know what was going on with the workgroup and wanted more information.

But Ms. Stojic labeled the letter and accusations as an attempt by a out-of-state for-profit insurers attempting to kill reform in the individual health insurance market.