



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 19, 2008

Contact: Steve Mitchell 248-891-2414
David Waymire 517-290-3610

Coalition Applauds AG Mike Cox and Sen. Mike Bishop for Leading Fight to Stop Blue Cross Bills

Not taken up in lame duck session

LANSING, Mich. — The Coalition for Access and Affordability in Michigan (CAAM), Put Michigan People First and Michigan Association of Health Plans today expressed appreciation to Attorney General Mike Cox, Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop, Sen. Tom George and the Senate Republican caucus for strong leadership in stopping bills supported by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan that would have taken away oversight from the attorney general and that would have allowed the Blues to dramatically raise rates on the elderly and sick without permission from the state. The bills could have resulted in an overall increase in Michigan health care costs of more than 23%.

“Attorney General Mike Cox and Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop have shown tremendous courage in leading the fight to stop action on bills that would have made enormous changes in Michigan health care coverage. Mike Cox and his office did a magnificent job in leading the charge to stop these complex, intricate bills from being taken up by the legislature after the election, when everything is so hurried,” said RoAnne Chaney, project manager for the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, which joined with Consumers Union, AARP, Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society-Michigan Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America and others to form the Put Michigan First Coalition.

“Mike Bishop, along with Sen. Tom George, the lead senator on the conference committee dealing with the bills, stood up to intense lobbying spending by BCBSM. They and other members of the Senate Republican caucus have been profiles in courage,” Debbie Lantzy-Talpos, president of CAAM said. “We look forward to Blue Cross joining consumers, health plans, and others at the table early next year. We also want to make sure that we integrate Michigan’s next steps with the national health care plans that are going to be considered in Washington.”

“By working to assure that these bills will be debated next year, when there can be a complete examination of the issue, Attorney General Cox, Senate Majority Leader Bishop, and Sen. George have helped all Michigan residents. We are committed to working with Gov. Jennifer Granholm, Sen. Bishop, and Speaker Dillon in crafting meaningful health reform legislation early in 2009,” MAHP Executive Director Rick Murdock said.

In addition to the three major groups, the Michigan UAW, Michigan AFL-CIO and other organizations, numerous hospitals and others opposed these bills.

For more information visit:

www.putmichiganpeoplefirst.com

www.ma hp.org