



# Michigan Association of Health Plans

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Sen. Bruce Patterson, Rep. Alma Wheeler Smith awarded Michigan ‘Legislators of the Year’ for outstanding dedication to state health care issues**

**LANSING, MI** — State Sen. Bruce Patterson (R-Canton) and Rep. Alma Wheeler Smith (D-Salem) have been named *Legislators of the Year* by the Michigan Association of Health Plans (MAHP) for outstanding contributions to health care issues.

Patterson and Wheeler Smith accepted their awards at MAHP’s 23<sup>rd</sup> annual summer conference at Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville.

“Representative Wheeler Smith and Senator Patterson have the qualities of a true leader reflected by their efforts in improving health care for the citizens of Michigan for many years,” said MAHP Executive Director Richard B. Murdock. “They have the confidence to stand alone, the empathy to listen to the needs of others and the courage to make tough decisions. MAHP is proud to call them our Legislators of the Year.”

The MAHP is an industry voice for 17 health care plans, covering over 2.1 million Michigan residents, and 45 businesses affiliated with the health care industry. MAHP facilitates communication among members, government, and the industry regarding health care issues of common concern.

“To receive the Legislator of the Year award from the MAHP is a great honor, but there is still much work to be done,” Patterson said. “More than 1 million Michigan residents don’t have access to health insurance, and for those lucky enough to be covered, skyrocketing costs are draining their pocketbooks. I believe that all Michigan citizens deserve access to affordable, quality health care, and achieving that goal is one of my top priorities in the Legislature.”

“I am proud to receive this recognition by MAHP. Access to affordable health care is not just a moral issue, it’s also an economic issue,” Wheeler Smith said. “When we ease the burden of health care costs, businesses can grow and create jobs in Michigan. I look forward to continuing to work with the MAHP to improve the health of our citizens and our economy.”

**more**

**Patterson, Wheeler Smith named legislators of year by MAHP**

Patterson is a Republican member of the Michigan Senate, representing the 7th district since 2003. His district covers parts of Wayne County. He previously served two terms in the Michigan House of Representatives, from 1999-2002. He was the first freshman representative to serve as the Associate Speaker Pro Tempore. In his second term, he was elected the Majority Floor Leader.

Before being elected to the state legislature, Patterson served two terms as a Wayne County Commissioner, from 1995-1998. He was also an administrator at Eastern Michigan University and had twenty years experience in private law practice. He received a B.A. from Wayne State University in 1969 and a J.D. in 1972 from the Law School at Wayne State University.

Wheeler Smith, a former state senator from 1994 to 2002, has also served the people of Washtenaw County as a Cablecasting Commissioner, a School Board member and president, and County Commissioner. Wheeler Smith was the first African American to run for governor on Michigan's Democratic ticket and the first woman to lead an appropriations caucus in the Legislature.

She has authored laws regulating personal protection orders between juveniles and their parents or guardians and a constitutional amendment which brought the Michigan Compiled Laws into conformity with federal disability terminology.

She has lived in Washtenaw County since 1943 and has been a resident of Salem Township since 1978. She has three adult children: Conan, Dana and Tara.

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