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In Union USA Action is a project supported by a group of unions. We'll provide you with research on issues that affect working people's lives, examine the records of elected officials on those issues, and give you ways to hold your elected representatives accountable. In Union is not affiliated with, does not take contributions from, and does not make contributions to any candidates or political parties. For more information, please visit www.inunionusa.com.

RESOURCES FOR NAVIGATING THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The health care system can be challenging to navigate, but there are individuals and organizations available to help. Here are some resources for you and your family:



Prescription Drugs Savings for Michiganders

MiRx is a prescription drug discount program for Michigan residents lacking prescription drug coverage. It's free to enroll in the program and receive an MiRx card, and it can save you typically between 5% and 25% on your prescriptions. For more information or to enroll, visit mihealth.org/mirx or call 1-866-755-6479.



Mental Health Services

In a newly implemented policy by the Biden Administration, any American experiencing a mental health crisis can dial 988 for 24/7 access to trained professionals. This easy-to-remember number is meant to replace the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.



Help or Treatment for Substance Abuse

If you or someone you know is suffering from substance abuse disorder, there is help. Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) to speak in confidence to a trained professional 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Taking Care of a Loved One? AARP is Here to Help

From financial and legal questions to medical questions, AARP knows where you can find an answer. From 8am to 8pm EST, agents are available to direct callers to the resources they need. For English, dial 1-877-333-5885; for Spanish, dial 1-888-971-2013.



SEPTEMBER 2022

COMBATING RISING HEALTH CARE COSTS IN MICHIGAN

A newsletter of, by, and for working people

Dear Reader,

Pharmaceutical companies are reporting record profits while health care costs skyrocket for Michigan families. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt our lives, and the opioid epidemic—a silent, unrelenting killer—continues to tear apart communities across the Wolverine State.

This is our first health care newsletter. However, as our quality of life, bank accounts, and mental health suffer, this edition and future editions of *In Union* will seek to offer some insight and, we hope, some optimism for you and your family.

Sincerely,
The *In Union* Team



Gov. Whitmer proposing \$1.4 billion to invest in Michigan's health care

“... Governor Whitmer announced her MI Healthy Communities plan, a \$1.4 billion proposal to expand care for families, build up facilities, and invest in local public health with federal relief dollars from President Biden's American Rescue Plan.”

Michigan Takes Action to Lower Health Care Costs

Americans are paying Big Pharma more for the top twenty drugs than the rest of the world combined. In 2020, the U.S. spent nearly double on health care per person than other wealthy nations, but our health care system ranked last. Fortunately, the U.S.

Senate recently passed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA), which includes provisions to make prescription drugs and health insurance more affordable for millions of Americans.



In Michigan, the Whitmer Administration has taken steps to alleviate the costs of health care and prescription drugs by:

- Lifting work requirements on Medicaid, extending the Healthy Michigan Plan to over 1 million people
- Increasing enrollment in public and private health insurance programs, resulting in 1 million more Michiganders with health care coverage
- Signing three bills to lower the cost of prescription drugs
- Supporting Attorney General Nessel’s work to hold drug companies accountable for skyrocketing insulin prices
- Releasing a plan to expand access to mental health care



SOURCES:

Public Citizen, 9/30/2021; Health System Tracker, 1/21/2022; State of Michigan, Press Release, 2/23/2022; State of Michigan, Press Release, 5/16/2022; State of Michigan, Press Release, 1/26/2022; State of Michigan, Press Release, 9/14/2021; Bridge MI, 2/25/2020; WILX 10, 9/14/2021; Michigan Legislature, House Bill 4346 (2021), accessed 8/11/2022; Michigan Legislature, House Bill 4349 (2021), accessed 8/11/2022; Michigan Legislature, House Bill 4353 (2021), accessed 8/11/2022; Michigan Legislature, House Bill 4358 (2021), accessed 8/11/2022.

What’s Next for Health Care in Michigan?

The Michigan State House has passed four bipartisan bills that could help drive down health care costs, but all four of them have stalled in the Republican-led State Senate.

- **House Bill 4346**—would cap insulin copays
- **House Bill 4349**—would require hospitals to post standard charges for certain items and services online for public view
- **House Bill 4353**—would require insurers to count all drug rebates received for medications toward a family’s maximum out-of-pocket cost or plan deductible
- **House Bill 4358**—would stop insurance companies from removing a prescription drug from their list of offerings during a plan year



Passing these bills would lower health care costs for Michigan families.

Health Care in the News

©CBS NEWS

“Senate Republicans block \$35 cap on price of insulin from Democratic bill”



“MI vets praise toxin health care act”

FORTUNE

“The world’s 10 biggest pharmaceutical companies raked in over \$700 billion in revenue in 2021”

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