



UPDATES FROM THE CAPITOL

April 1 - 15, 2024

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, April 16th, 2024

Special Election for Michigan House Districts 13 and 25

Friday, May 17th, 2024

Second Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference (CREC) of 2024 (to be held in the Capitol Building's House Appropriations Room)

MICHIGAN HOUSE CONTROL HANGS IN THE BALANCE: SPECIAL ELECTIONS COULD TIP THE SCALE

The April 16 special elections in two Metro Detroit districts carry immense significance for Michigan's House control, currently deadlocked between Republicans and Democrats. Following successful mayoral races for former state representatives Kevin Coleman (D-Westland, district 25) and Lori Stone (D-Warren, district 13), both vacated their seats in the Michigan House in December, leading to the current 54-54 split between the parties. However, Tuesday's vote could break this stalemate.

With Democratic candidates Mai Xiong and Peter Herzberg expected to secure victories against Republican Candidates Ronald Singer and Josh Powell in their respective Democratic-leaning districts, the stage is set for a potential shift in power. Xiong and Herzberg prioritize local issues like education funding and infrastructure improvements, while Singer and Powell aim to challenge the odds by focusing on taxation and transparency. Regardless of the outcome, the special elections mark a pivotal moment in Michigan's political landscape for years to come.

MEDICAID HEALTH PLAN REBID: CHANGES IN THE COVERAGE LANDSCAPE

In the recent Medicaid health plan rebid by Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services, significant changes have reshaped coverage across the state's ten regions. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan emerged as the primary beneficiary, expanding its territory across various regions. The rebid, a key part of Governor Whitmer's 2024-2025 fiscal year budget recommendation, will prioritize equitable, person-centered care for the nearly two million Medicaid beneficiaries. Additionally, revisions to the payment structure include withholding a greater percentage of funds to incentivize improved health outcomes and address social determinants of health.

The rebid resulted in a redistribution of territories among nine health plans, with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan gaining ground in several regions. Notably, McLaren emerged as the sole plan in nine of the ten regions, while Blue Cross now has a presence in seven regions, marking significant shifts in coverage landscape.

At this time, the contracts are not yet secured in place. The new contracts are scheduled to come into effect on October 1 of this year.

SENATE INTRODUCES "MOMNIBUS" LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS BIRTHING INEQUITIES

Senate Democrats introduced the Michigan "Momnibus" package, comprising 10 bills aimed at addressing birthing inequities in the state. Led by the MI State of Birth Justice coalition, the legislation focuses on enhancing accountability for maternal health care providers and creating equity in birthing practices. Here are the key bills from the package:

[SB 818](#) (Sen. Erica Geiss): Requires MDHHS to include published studies and reports on biased or unjust perinatal care and mandates health facilities to report maternal deaths. This bill also codifies the maternal mortality review team.

[SB 819](#) (Sen. Erica Geiss): Requires the Michigan Department of Civil Rights to receive reports of obstetric racism and violence, utilizing patient-reported experiences. MDCR must provide a report to relevant health committees and agencies.

[SB 820](#) (Sen. Mary Cavanagh): Mandates stabilization of laboring patients before termination of care and ensures hospitals allow patients to be accompanied by a partner, spouse, or doula. Hospitals must provide proof of policy to LARA.

[SB 821](#) (Sen. Mary Cavanagh): Requires medical malpractice insurers to provide DHHS with information regarding perinatal care services policies.

[SB 822](#) (Sen. Sarah Anthony): Allows individuals to detail life-sustaining treatment preferences if pregnant when an advance directive becomes effective.

[SB 823](#) (Sen. Stephanie Chang): Amends the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include pregnancy or lactation status in the definition of "sex" and protect against discrimination.

[SB 824](#) (Sen. Sylvia Santana): Requires a non-punitive plan of safe care when an infant is substance exposed.

[SB 825](#) (Sen. Sarah Anthony): Adds licensed midwives to the state's essential health provider loan repayment program.

[SB 826](#) (Sen. Stephanie Chang): Establishes a scholarship program for low-income residents working toward certification as a doula.

[SB 827](#) (Sen. Sylvia Santana): Mandates private payer reimbursement for licensed midwives.

These bills have been referred to the Senate Committee on Housing and Human Services for consideration. Additionally, Rep. Laurie Pohutsky is collaborating on legislation to license freestanding birth centers in Michigan.

PROPOSED TIMELINE SET FOR REDRAWING DETROIT'S STATE SENATE DISTRICTS

The Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission has laid out a comprehensive timeline to redraw Detroit's state Senate districts, aiming for completion by late May. This follows a ruling deeming the previous maps unconstitutional due to violations of the Equal Protection Clause.

The proposed schedule includes public hearings in June to ensure community input, with a final map set for court review by June 27. Despite objections regarding the timeline's duration and concerns about its potential disruption to commissioners with full-time jobs, the commission has voted in favor of the proposed schedule.

NEW BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS BY GOVERNOR

Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced several appointments to various boards and commissions, showcasing our state's diverse talent pool. Notable appointments are listed below. The complete list of new appointments is available at the Governor's Press Releases.

Appointments Include:

Child Lead Exposure Elimination Commission:

Alison Dickson: Reappointed to represent physicians

Alan G. Vanderberg: Reappointed to represent local government

Michigan Board of Speech Language Pathology:

Dr. Denise Ludwig: Appointed to represent speech language pathologists (Succeeds Abaries Farhad)

Michigan Board of Licensed Midwifery:

Angela Wells: Appointed to represent nurse midwives (Succeeds Geradine Simkins)

Michigan Board of Nursing Home Administrators:

Alethea Nichols-Taylor and LaTosha Agee-Gussman: Appointed to represent the general public

Dr. Mark DeLano: Appointed to represent licensed physicians

Daniel Velez: Appointed to represent nursing homes (Succeeds Donald Haney)

Certificate of Need Commission:

Dr. Amy McKenzie: Reappointed to represent a nonprofit health care corporation operating pursuant to the nonprofit health care corporation reform act and Independents

Renee Turner-Bailey: Reappointed to represent organized labor unions and Democrats

Dr. Eric Ferguson: Reappointed to represent physicians and Independents

Dr. Mark DeLano: Appointed to represent licensed physicians and school of medicine and Democrats (Succeeds Justin Dimmick)

Daniel Velez: Appointed to represent nursing homes and Independents

Michigan Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee:

Kassem H. Elhelou and Rachael Prusi: Appointed to represent pharmacists