



October 5, 2009

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
133 Hart SOB
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Stabenow:

As you look forward to a vote on health care reform legislation in the Senate Finance Committee this week, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce urges you to remain focused on reforms that will lower costs, improve the quality and make sure every American has access to affordable coverage.

There are three areas in this debate which we strongly oppose: an employer “pay or play” mandate, a government-run option and new taxes on job providers to pay for the almost \$1 trillion price tag associated with reform.

In addition to these key areas of concern, we are also concerned with the exclusion of stand-alone vision coverage in your amendment #C-7. We are pleased that your amendment would allow stand-alone dental plans to sell coverage alongside major medical plans in the exchanges. This type of buy-in option would facilitate patient choice and increase access to comprehensive dental care within health care reform. We are concerned, however, that leaving out stand-alone vision plans from the legislation would threaten the future of vision coverage currently received by millions of Americans. To this end, we urge you to advocate for additional changes to the legislation to permit vision services provided by ancillary, or stand-alone, plans.

As you prepare for a committee vote on health care reform this week, we urge you to keep the aforementioned concerns in mind and to focus your efforts on reforming the system to improve access to quality health care and stabilizing – if not lowering – skyrocketing costs. We stand prepared to work with you to achieve this critical goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Block". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wendy Block
Director, Health Policy & Human Resources