

STATE SENATOR · JIM BARCIA · 31ST DISTRICT

Barcia Press Release

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Senator Barcia Appointed to Bipartisan Healthcare Panel

Panel seeks ways to create affordable, accessible healthcare for Michigan citizens

LANSING, Mich. – Senator Jim Barcia (D-Bay City) was recently appointed by Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) to join Senator Jason Allen (R-Traverse City), Senator Tom George (R-Kalamazoo) and Senator Mark Jansen (R-Gaines Township) on a bipartisan healthcare panel to find a solution for Michigan’s healthcare crisis. The panel, which includes representatives from Blue Cross Blue Shield, AARP and several healthcare associations throughout Michigan, plans to meet several times in Lansing as well as throughout the state to hear public testimony.

“I’m honored to be a part of this panel and work alongside my colleagues to find a solution to this critical problem,” said Barcia, who serves on the Department of Community Health Senate Appropriations subcommittee. “No one should be without health insurance and we have an obligation as public officials to ensure all citizens, particularly our most vulnerable, have affordable and accessible healthcare. I am honored that Senator Bishop has entrusted we with this critical task.”

In 2007, a report issued by the Center for Health Care Research and Transformation stated that 11.6 percent of all state residents, or about 1.1 million people, did not have some form of private or public health insurance. In 2006, the number was 10.5 percent and those with coverage were paying less out-of-pocket costs. Last session the Legislature wrestled with a proposal to reform the Individual Health Market. It is hoped that this panel can build consensus between health care insurers, providers and consumers and offer a revised IMR package that can pass this session.

“Senator Barcia has the knowledge and the experience to help move these critical issues forward,” said Bishop. “ He has the trust of members on both sides of the aisle and I believe he will help forge compromise and long lasting solutions to the many health care challenges that Michigan faces.”

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