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May 11, 2023

House Health Policy Committee Members,

On behalf of the over 900,000 covered lives that the Economic Alliance for Michigan (EAM) represents in its membership, I encourage you to oppose HB 4071.

I have been working at EAM for over 15 years. Every year during my tenure healthcare costs for workers and the employers they work for have risen. Not once have costs ever gone down. Out of pocket costs for workers have increased from \$947 in 2007 to \$1314 in 2021. Overall private health insurance spending has increased 55% over that same time. Wages have not come close to increasing at the same rate, which means real people have less money for every other thing in their life due to their ever-increasing healthcare spending. Small businesses have not seen their revenue increase at the rate of healthcare inflation, so they too have less money for every other part of their business.

Anytime a State Legislature passes any insurance mandate, the people who end up paying more are the workers who are employed by small businesses, the small businesses that employ them, and individuals who must buy health insurance on their own. It is an easy decision to help a small segment of patients who are affected by some life-threatening disease. But the trade-off is to lower the take home pay for workers in small businesses and increase expenses on their employers. It is a no-win situation.

We do appreciate that there is an attempt by Representative Steckloff and the committee to provide some balance by considering HB 4409. We support that bill and transparency in every part of healthcare, but transparency alone is not enough. Generations of lawmakers before you have ignored the healthcare cost crisis and working families have suffered as a result. We don't just need greater insight to show us what the problem is, we need all of you to dig in and make tough choices on how to address the underlying costs of our healthcare delivery system. Only then can we help all patients, not just a small segment of patients with certain cancers.

On behalf of our worker and employer partners, we look forward to working with the committee to address the systematic issues in healthcare that contribute to the cost crisis.

Sincerely,

Bret J Jackson
President and CEO
The Economic Alliance for Michigan