

Health care must be the top state budget priority, and the combined voice of doctors and hospitals resonates when advocating for affordable and accessible medical services for all Michigan residents.

Formed in 2002, the Partnership for Michigan's Health includes the Michigan Health & Hospital Association, the Michigan Osteopathic Association and the Michigan State Medical Society. The group works closely with all stakeholders, including business, labor, manufacturers, the insurance industry, lawmakers and the Granholm administration.

In May 2003, Health Management Associates, a Lansing-based health care consulting firm, released *The Future of Michigan Medicaid: Issues, Trends, and Principles for Reform*. The study found that the Michigan Medicaid program is underfunded by more than \$950 million when compared to Medicare. As a result of this partnership-commissioned endeavor, that key finding has become an accepted fact within state government.

Also in 2003, the partnership developed its *10 Concepts for Medicaid Reform*, a comprehensive initiative focusing on Michigan's failing Medicaid program. Central to the proposal are improved state funding and an overhaul of current structural and administrative inefficiencies to maximize the value of taxpayer dollars and improve patient care. This industry-led effort illustrates the commitment to practical solutions to the Medicaid crisis.

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ing the elderly, the disabled and single mothers. In addition, it was able to successfully lobby the state to contract only with HMOs that met minimum solvency standards.

In mid-2004, the partnership released an economic impact analysis of health care data, including data and information from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the U.S. Bureau of Labor and the U.S. Census Bureau. Titled the *Economic Impact of Health Care in Michigan*, the study quantified the substantial economic impact of health care in the state, including the fact that health care is Michigan's largest employer. The 2005 economic impact study is slated for release in June this year.

Despite Michigan's critical budget challenges, the partnership continues to urge state legislators and the governor to avoid any new reduction in the health care budget, as further cuts would have a debilitating impact on the ability of Michigan's

medical community to deliver care. Should these cuts occur, the impact on Michigan's largest employer and the state's economy will also be significant.

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