



DRIVE

HEALTHCARE FORWARD

"No one should be in a position where they have to consider whether their healthcare is affordable before they seek care."

-A.J., Marquette

THE ROAD AHEAD

To help residents stay healthy and strong, Michigan must:



Protect Medicaid for children and families, including the Healthy Michigan Plan.



Ensure access to high quality, affordable healthcare.



Create better access to mental health coverage and recruit more practitioners.



TIME FOR A TUNE-UP

Healthcare is constantly on the minds of Michigan families. We hear all the time from people who are concerned about cost and accessibility. And if there is one silver lining in the attempts by Congress to repeal the Affordable Care Act in 2017, it is that healthcare became a kitchen table issue—something we have seen reflected by activists and by people at the voting booth who are concerned about the state of our current system. Barriers to access and cost concerns plague the system set up to ensure that Michiganders stay healthy, so the state must make improving healthcare a priority.



ABOUT THE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR MICHIGAN

We all agree Michigan needs a major tune-up. And like the real vehicles we all depend on, it takes a lot of components and tools to make our state go. Without good jobs and training, reliable healthcare, quality education, strong families, and a safe environment, our state can't run properly. That's why we've created a clear and comprehensive plan to help lawmakers on the road ahead—the Owner's Manual for Michigan.



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REPAIRING THE PROBLEM:



HOW TO IMPROVE HEALTHCARE

- 1. Promote innovative policies and provide financial support for Medicaid.** Medicaid programs provide coverage to nearly 2.5 million Michiganders, and Michigan continues to be a leader when it comes to providing care through this federal-state partnership program. But new so-called “flexibility” given by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has resulted in initiatives such as work requirements for the Healthy Michigan Plan that will make it harder for individuals to receive coverage. Michigan must move away from initiatives like this that limit coverage and instead push for policies that further the intention of the Medicaid program: providing coverage to people with low incomes.
- 2. Expand access to affordable, accessible healthcare coverage for all.** While the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has improved options for individuals to access health coverage, concerns about costs and accessibility still remain. Moving forward, Michigan must continue to find avenues to make sure that healthcare coverage is not a roadblock to paying for groceries, going to work or school, or caring for children. Options to improve the system include increased subsidies, prescription drug pricing reform, and protecting some of the most popular reforms in the ACA as a roadmap to the ultimate goal of ensuring affordable, quality healthcare for all.
- 3. Increase accessibility to mental health services.** Michigan’s mental health system is complicated, with a long history of issues with accessibility and funding. There are also deep concerns in Michigan about the lack of individuals who can provide this critical care. That is why it is imperative that we encourage medical professionals to go into this field to ensure that wait times and lack of additional staffing are not barriers to those seeking help. One of the best ways to improve our mental health system is to speak with experts and families about what they see as the most appropriate path, but also to encourage the Legislature to allocate adequate funding, which has been lacking significantly, to make sure that state hospitals can provide coverage and families can access services in their own communities.

SHARING THE ROAD

Equity is of utmost importance when it comes to building a better Michigan. Racial disparities are prevalent in our healthcare system. Despite huge coverage gains through the Affordable Care Act (ACA), people of color are still more likely to be uninsured than their White counterparts. Costs also disproportionately impact people of color along with a number of key health status indicators including obesity, diabetes and asthma. Research has also shown the experience of people of color is different when they enter the doctor’s office—with medical professionals not perceiving pain as intense, not prescribing the best prescription options, or even spending an equal amount of time with the patient.

Based on history, many people of color have an understandable distrust of the healthcare system, which is why a focus on equity in this space is so important. It is imperative that we get a greater understanding of the experiences and reasons for our state’s continued disparities in healthcare. We must also insist that as our state moves forward in achieving goals of expanding access and exploring innovative healthcare that we also ensure equity is included at every step.