



# State Senator • 19th District Mark **SCHAUER**

## *Making Health Care More Affordable and Accessible*

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*Dear Friends,*

*The problems with our current health care system are making things more difficult for families and businesses in Calhoun and Jackson Counties, as well as all across Michigan. If we do not find ways to make quality care more accessible and affordable, consumers will continue to struggle financially, and our companies will be less able to compete.*

*That's why I am championing efforts to make health care reform a top priority and working to bring groups together to find compromises and solutions to these challenges. I have held several town halls to get information directly from individuals and experts and am working on legislation to improve the situation.*

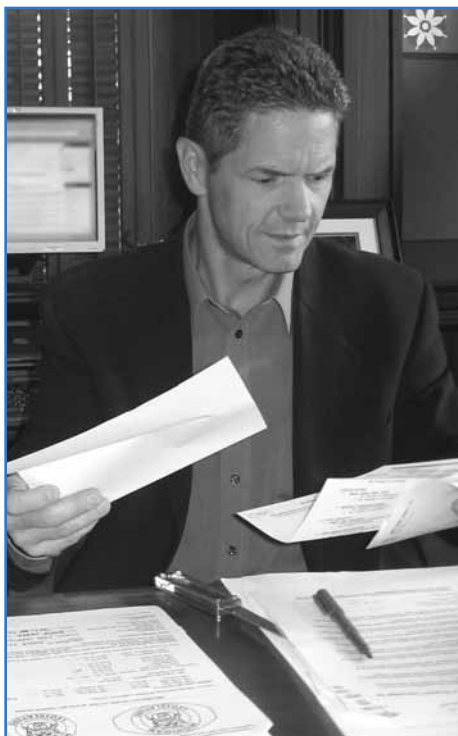
*I plan to continue working to make health care more available and less costly and look forward to hearing your ideas and concerns. Thank you for allowing me to work for you on these important issues.*

*Mark Schauer*  
*State Senator • 19th District*

## **Make Your Opinion Known**

**S**enator Schauer is a supporter of a statewide petition drive to put the question of health care access for everyone on the ballot this November. The effort would amend Michigan's Constitution to require the Legislature to develop a plan for increasing health care affordability and access

for Michigan citizens and businesses. The coalition organizing the drive includes health care professionals, faith organizations, community leaders and many others and must collect thousands of signatures before July to get the question on the ballot. For more information, visit [www.healthcareformichigan.org](http://www.healthcareformichigan.org).



# Schauer Holds Town Halls on Health Care Reform

Senator Schauer has hosted town halls across the district, in Jackson and Battle Creek, to address the issue of health care reform. At these community events, citizens struggling with the rising cost of basic care shared their personal experiences, and heard from physicians, consumer advocate experts, and others about options available to them.

With more than 1 million people lacking health insurance in Michigan alone, urgent action is required to increase coverage. A recent survey found that one-third of respondents had skipped necessary tests or treatment

because they couldn't afford it. And a study conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and released during "Cover the Uninsured Week" concluded that average costs to individuals for health care have risen by approximately \$3,000 per year, while wages have stayed the same or dropped.

"If we don't act soon, we're going to continue having people going bankrupt or using the emergency room for basic care, which is more costly for all of us," said Senator

Schauer. "The status quo is just unacceptable."

Schauer emphasized that comprehensive solutions must be pursued. He listed increased focus on preventive care, technology and standardized forms that maintain medical privacy, pooling resources, and greater efficiency as good first steps to better care.



## Bipartisan Effort Needed On Health Care

Senator Schauer understands that our broken health care system affects everyone, not just Democrats or Republicans. That is why he has partnered with Representative Rick Shaffer (R-Three Rivers), consumer advocates, business groups, labor organizations and others to promote the national "Divided We Fail" campaign. This effort urges leaders on both sides of the aisle to make health care and financial security top legislative priorities.

Included in the "Divided We Fail" platform are the goals that:

- All Americans should have access to **affordable health care**, including prescription drugs, and these costs should not burden future generations.
- **Wellness and prevention efforts**, including changes in personal behavior such as diet and exercise, should be top national priorities.

Senator Schauer and Representative Shaffer have introduced Senate Resolution 160 and House Resolution 307 to help encourage their colleagues to join them in working together on these important

issues. To learn more about the Divided We Fail campaign, visit [www.dividedwefail.org](http://www.dividedwefail.org).



## Providing Care for Children

**T**oo many children are suffering without health care, through no fault of their own. Senator Schauer has been a strong proponent of the MICHild program, which provides coverage for uninsured children of working families. He is also working to ensure that the federal program that supports MICHild is expanded, and he sponsored Senate Resolution 92 to urge Congress to do so.

Schauer is working with his colleagues on additional legislation in Lansing that would help families with autistic children receive assistance from their insurance companies for the numerous expenses related to the condition. Meeting the basic health care needs of children is a must, to allow them to learn in school and grow to reach their full potential as adults in our community.



## The Health Care Crisis - By the Numbers

**I**n Calhoun County already there are about **23,000** uninsured people, which is about **16.8 percent** of residents.

Between **12,000 and 16,000** people in Jackson County do not have health insurance.

Nearly **47 million** Americans, or **16 percent** of the population, were without health insurance in 2005, the latest government data available.

Rapidly rising health insurance premiums are the

main reason cited by all small firms for not offering coverage. The average annual increase in inflation has been **2.5 percent** while health insurance premiums for small firms have escalated an average of **12 percent** annually.

The average employee contribution to company-provided health insurance has increased more than **143 percent** since 2000. Average out-of-pocket costs for deductibles, co-payments for medications, and co-insurance for physician and hospital visits rose

**115 percent** during the same period.

The amount workers pay for family coverage nationwide has increased by **30 percent**, from **\$8,281** in 2001 to **\$10,728** in 2005.

Employee income has increased by only **3 percent** in the same time period.

The average cost employers pay for their share of family coverage has increased by **28 percent**, from **\$6,360** to **\$8,143**.

## Prescription Drug Cards and Information

**T**he MiRx (My Prescription) Card is a prescription drug discount program for Michigan residents who do not have prescription drug coverage. For more information or to request an application, call **1-800-259-8016** or **1-866-755-6479** (Press 2, then 1), or visit [www.mihealth.org/mirx/index.html](http://www.mihealth.org/mirx/index.html).



Medicare beneficiaries can find out information about

Medicare Prescription Drug Plans by calling **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227). Or, to find prescription plans in your area online, go to [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov), page down to "Learn More About Plans," and enter your state,

then county. Plan options will pop up.

Compare Prescription Drug Prices - The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) website lists prices of commonly prescribed medications. Visit [www.michigandrugprices.com/9A0689B2-3B75-4F2B-8F6F-075AFEE38B21](http://www.michigandrugprices.com/9A0689B2-3B75-4F2B-8F6F-075AFEE38B21)



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## Community Contact Information

### **2-1-1**

2-1-1 is a free phone service in Jackson and Calhoun Counties that can connect you with health and human services information 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. If you have a landline and need information, call **2-1-1**. Cell phone and pay phone users can call **(517) 789-1211** or **1-866-561-2500** in Jackson County. In Calhoun County, cell phone users can call **565-4159** and long-distance callers can call **1-800-250-5628**.

### **MiChild**

Services covered under MiChild include regular checkups, shots, emergency care, dental care, pharmacy, hospital care, prenatal care and delivery, vision and hearing, mental health and substance abuse services for children under age 19. For more information or to enroll your child, call **1-888-988-6300**, or apply online at [www.michigan.gov/mdch](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch).

### **Federally Qualified Health Centers**

Federally Qualified Health Centers in Jackson, Battle Creek and Albion provide primary health care including adult, pediatric, prenatal, geriatric, behavioral health and dental care regardless of ability to pay. In Jackson, contact the Center for Family Health at **(517) 784-3950**, or visit [www.centerforfamilyhealth.org](http://www.centerforfamilyhealth.org). In Battle Creek, contact the Family Health Center of Battle Creek at **(269) 965-8866**. In Albion, contact the Family Health Center of Albion at **(517) 629-6540**. You can also visit the Family Health Center of Battle Creek and Albion on the web at [www.fhcbc.org](http://www.fhcbc.org).

### **Jackson County Project Access**

People in Jackson County without health insurance can sign up for coordinated health care coverage through Project Access, a collaborative of the Jackson County Medical Society, Foote Health System, Jackson County Community Foundation, LifeWays, Jackson County 2-1-1 and the United Way of Jackson County. Project Access provides health care to low-income individuals who do not have coverage and do not qualify for public assistance. Residents enrolled in the program receive access to primary care physicians and many other health care services at no or minimal cost. To reach Project Access, call **2-1-1** from a landline, or **1-866-561-2500** from a cell phone.

### **Connecting Calhoun County**

Residents of Calhoun County without insurance can access various health services through "Connecting Calhoun County," a new community partnership of the Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Regional Health Alliance, Calhoun County Health Plan, Volunteer Center and other local providers. For example, residents who do not meet the requirements for Medicaid, Medicare or any other program may be eligible for a community-sponsored program called "Calhoun Health Plan - Plan B," which provides basic medical care at little or no cost to the member. For more information, call **2-1-1**. Low-income seniors can also contact the Calhoun Health Plan at **269-969-6494** for help to obtain free medications through various pharmaceutical companies.

## Important Phone Numbers

- **Health and Human Services** info 24 hours per day: call 2-1-1
- **MiChild** 1-888-988-6300
- **Jackson County Project Access** - call 2-1-1
- **Calhoun County Health Plan** (269) 969-6462
- **Center for Family Health in Jackson** (517) 784-3950
- **Family Health Center of Battle Creek** (269) 965-8866
- **Family Health Center of Albion** (517) 629-6540
- **MiRx (My Prescription) Cards** 1-800-259-8016 or 1-866-755-6479
- **Medicare Prescription Drug Plans** 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)