

Theis Statement:

“After speaking to a number of the insurance committee members a common concern that we all hear from residents throughout Michigan is how upset patients are with the high cost of prescription drugs and healthcare. In fact, a recent poll showed 80% of Michiganders believe prescription drug prices are too high.

Michigan is the only state in the nation that already mandates that health insurers cover all FDA approved cancer treatments and drugs. While the majority of other states have passed legislation dealing with oral chemo parity, it is not identical across those states; and nearly all of them have followed up by passing additional laws to control the resulting increases in prescription drug costs. Left unregulated, this mandate increases costs to insurers and thus raises premiums. Big pharmaceutical companies take advantage of these government mandates; and in an era of exponentially increasing insurance premiums, giving pharmaceutical companies the opportunity for a blank check is unwise and would harm those without insurance the most.

These bills were referred to the Health Policy Committee because they have pending legislation they are working on, which would address the transparency of pharmaceutical companies. I believe that transparency is an important part of any parity legislation we pass and it makes sense that these bills be sent to the same committee so they can be worked on together.

I would also like to note that Representative Gary Glenn who is actively fighting cancer made the motion to refer the bills and a number of the bill co-sponsors supported the motion. This includes Representative Beau LaFave who just last week was the recipient of the Cancer Fighter of the Year Award from the American Cancer Society. Senator Hansen and Representative Rendon, the two bill sponsors did not object to the referral, and no cards were entered into the record opposing the referral either.”