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Rep. Huizenga News Conference Announcing Legislation to Bring Muskegon’s Community Health Coverage Model to More Communities – Supporting Small Business and Workers

MUSKEGON, MI - Congressman Bill Huizenga will be announcing the introduction of the Community MultiShare Coverage Program Act at a special event on Friday, June 3, 2022, at 2:00 pm at the office of Access Health, 1200 Ransom Street, Muskegon, Michigan. Huizenga’s legislation will fund national replication of Muskegon County’s Access Health Coverage program, considered one of the most innovative and successful approaches to addressing health care access in the nation.

For over two decades, the Access Health plan has locally provided an affordable and robust coverage option for small businesses and their workers unable to access commercial coverage due to cost barriers. Through partnership with Trinity Health Muskegon, the model’s success has enjoyed national recognition as a proven solution to ensure as many people as possible in Muskegon County have access to affordable healthcare.

Today, communities need solutions such as Access Health - a unique and well-tested model of coverage in Muskegon that the nation can embrace. There is growing interest in its replication, particularly as emergency federal coverage supports implemented during COVID-19 expire. This legislation will help fund a critical needed expansion and continue to put Muskegon County on the map as a community committed to local innovation and the wellbeing of all residents.

Rep. Huizenga will be joined at the news conference and event by community stakeholder attendees, including:

- Jack Russell, President of Rolar Industries and Chair of the Muskegon Heights Business Association
- Kathy Moore, Director of Public Health Muskegon County
- Gary Allore, President, Trinity Health Muskegon
- Don Shampine, President of Strategic Insurance Services, Access Health Board President
- Park Kersman, CEO Lorin Industries
- Emily Morgenstern, Marketing Director, Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce

Other local officials representing Muskegon County government and the City of Muskegon Heights will also be attendance.

Jeff Fortenbacher, Executive Director of Access Health, believes that this is the right time for expanding the multi-share model approach. “I see so much potential for Access Health as an affordable option for small businesses trying to hire and retain a workforce in today’s tight market” Fortenbacher said. “This is a program that helps reboot local economies, which require a strong and vital small business sector. We hear it all the time – businesses today face massive hiring challenges, which limit their ability to keep regular hours or provide their pre-COVID service level. The ability to offer coverage like Access Health can be a game changer for these small businesses, their workers, and our communities.”

“Access Health helps small business workers,” Fortenbacher continued. “We can make a difference with a commonsense approach to health coverage that removes financial barriers to economic mobility. Our plan provides a necessary bridge to economic independence for people as they take that first step away from Medicaid and other government support. As our team works in partnership with our members to improve their health, we recognize that economic mobility is a critical element of health.”

Established in 1999, Access Health provides affordable community coverage to eligible small businesses and their workers. One of the only community coverage models of its type in the nation, Access Health’s legacy work includes its nationally recognized multi-share health plan and regional management of Michigan’s State Medical Plan, a previous Medicaid expansion effort.

For more information about this event, contact Jeff Fortenbacher at coverage@access-health.org, or (231) 728-5180

To learn more, visit www.access-health.org.