

## Acknowledgement of the Healthcare Crisis in Rural America

In a recent article by Lauren Hughes and Sameer Vohra in the Daily Yonder, the crisis facing rural communities about the lack of healthcare was addressed with clear suggestions for solutions. It's no secret that rural hospitals have

dents in rural areas are age 60 or older compared to 21 percent of urban/suburban areas<sup>2</sup>. The authors identified five steps that the Biden administration could take that would positively impact rural America: Rethink How Rural



“struggled with financial troubles for years”. In northeastern Michigan, we have experienced mergers and acquisitions of health systems including Ascension St. Mary’s Health and Mid-Michigan Health in West Branch, and Ascension St. Joseph Health in Tawas. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic last year, there is greater concern about how rural healthcare systems can be preserved.

In 2019, 17% of Americans lived in rural communities<sup>1</sup>. In Michigan, that number is 18%, with 82% of Michiganders living in a metro area. In addition, about 32 percent of Michigan resi-

Healthcare Providers Are Paid; Expand Mental Health Services; Build Transformational Leadership; Bring Back Pregnancy Care – In a Better Way; and Invest in Health – Promoting Rural Infrastructure.

*The Daily Yonder is dedicated to telling the stories of rural people in America. To read the full article, go to <https://dailyyonder.com/rural-health-care-is-in-crisis-here-are-5-innovative-ways-biden-can-help-it-transform/2021/01/26/>.*

1 <https://2020census.gov/en/focus/rural.html>

2 <https://www.mlive.com/news/erry-2018/12/906ac4ccb82663/comparing-urban-vs-rural-michi.html>

Gloria Brooks, Editor



### Ready to take ACTION locally?

Check out the Community Action Committee’s update in the ICDP Committee Roundup section on Page 7. We still need to step up our visibility throughout Iosco County!

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### Want to Vote?

To vote in the MDP Convention, you must be a member of the party in addition to your donation to the ICDP. To join the MDP, visit their website at [michigandems.com/join](http://michigandems.com/join)



## MDP Convention Outcomes

I was one of more than 1,300 credentialed delegates and members of their caucuses attending the Michigan Democratic Party’s virtual spring convention on Saturday February 20. It was my first time attending a convention and checked off a bucket list activity – although I look forward to attending one in person in the future. During the convention, Lavora Barnes was re-elected as chairwoman; Mark LaChey was elected as 1st vice-chair; and Fay Beydoun was elected as 2nd vice-chair of the state party. It was thrilling to hear all of our Democratic lawmakers address the convention in either live or taped sessions.

*“We have a lot of work ahead of us leading up to the 2022 elections, and I need every Democrat in every corner of the state to stay engaged so we can re-elect ‘those women from Michigan’” Lavora Barnes, MDP Chair*

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Attorney General Dana Nessel, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, Sen. Gary Peters, and Congressman Dan Kildee were just some of the leaders who energized the virtual audience with their upcoming priorities, including prevailing in next year’s elections.

“(The 2020 election) ... shows us the impact of voting, the impact of elections — we can change our state, we can change our country and we can change our Democracy”, Benson said. I know the ICDP is ready to join Democrats across the state to continue this momentum of change.

*Gloria Brooks, Editor*



## “The Beacon” is ICDP’s new newsletter name

The ICDP Executive Board supported a recommendation to name the monthly newsletter “The Beacon” starting with this edition. Linked to the ICDP’s new logo featuring the Tawas Point Lighthouse, a beacon is “a source of light or inspiration; a lighthouse or other signal for guidance” (Merriam-Webster dictionary). To quote our own Jim Mortimer, a beacon “...swings 360 degrees reporting on the past and pointing to the future”. The Beacon’s goal is to light the way for Iosco County Dems, its members, and the community to gain information based on facts, create opportunities for unity, and initiate reforms in our community, state and country to improve quality of life and the American dream.

*Gloria Brooks, Editor*

## Why I'm a Democrat—*Laurie Miles*

The influences that made me a Democrat began in my childhood. I grew up in a family where my mother was a homemaker and my father supported the family on his wages as a tool and die maker at General Motors. The wages and benefits he earned, thanks to a strong union, allowed him to comfortably support his family. I was aware that he was a Democrat because he saw the Democratic Party supporting the labor movement.

Unfortunately, my father became disabled and died at a young age due to the effects of multiple sclerosis. In addition to his union and VA benefits, our family survived on Social Security Benefits. Those benefits were part of a social safety net put in place by FDR, a Democrat. Those benefits helped me earn my college degrees and put me on the way to my career as a clinical psychologist.

As a career woman and a mother, I saw Democratic policies as being the ones that were supportive of my life goals. Democrats were the ones that seemed to care about extending equal rights to women and putting money into policies that supported families. I have a daughter and two granddaughters. I want my granddaughters to grow up with more opportunities and perhaps an easier road than was available to me.

There are many other issues, including civil rights, reproductive rights, climate change, and reasonable gun control laws where I see Democratic positions as being closer to my own. I generally voted for Democrats, but did not become politically active until 2016 when one of the most qualified people to ever run for President lost to someone that I viewed as completely ill-suited for the job. His performance as President ended up being even worse than I expected it to be. Seeing how the Republican Party enabled him and couldn't stand up to him, even when he incited a violent uprising, has reinforced my commitment to the Democratic Party.

While we have some differing perspectives on issues within the party, I think our differences make us stronger. I believe that the Democratic Party is the far better option between the two major parties and that years from now, will be viewed as having been on the right side of history.

*Laurie Miles*

## Your Feedback is Requested!

Please join the conversation by submitting your response to **"Why Are You a Democrat?"** for publication in next month's newsletter. Email Gloria Brooks at [gloriadbrooks@att.net](mailto:gloriadbrooks@att.net) by the 1st of the month.

### ICDP is on Social Media!

Direct links to our pages:

#### Facebook

Public page:

[www.facebook.com/loscoCountyDems](http://www.facebook.com/loscoCountyDems)

Private ICDP Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/513749385704570/>

#### Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/loscoCountyDems>

#### Instagram:

[www.instagram.com/ioscocountydems](http://www.instagram.com/ioscocountydems)

#### On the web:

[www.ioscocountydems.org](http://www.ioscocountydems.org)

Please contact Duane Breijak at [dbreijak@gmail.com](mailto:dbreijak@gmail.com) if you have any questions or additions to our social media presence.



## Guest Speaker

This month's guest speaker was Joanne Cromley from the Cheboygan County Democratic Party (CCDP). Joanne led a discussion about the CCDP's bipartisan approach to community involvement. Joanne became chair in September 2020, after serving as vice chair for 4 years.



## Learnings from February's Brew & Stew

CCDP's community investment strategy started a dozen years ago. They created the inaugural *Earth Week Plus Expo* ([earthweekplus.com](http://earthweekplus.com)). Its vision was to create a way to get outside and enjoy Northern Michigan while celebrating Earth Day all spring. The Earth Week Plus Adventures are scheduled throughout Northern Michigan from Cheboygan to Mackinaw City to Indian River. It's a family friendly event held at the local high school throughout the month of April. There are various activities such as presentations with live reptiles, snakes and other animals; learning sessions on conservation, a *March for Science* and a preserve trail hike. There's also a focus on inclusion and diversity including Native Americans who host a sunrise service.

Seven years ago, CCDP members became aware of the environmental issues caused by the twin pipelines in the Straights of Mackinaw by Enbridge Line 5. They started meeting weekly at a local bookstore to develop strategies including engaging other concerned citizens and started attending legislative hours in Lansing. Eventually they became supporters and active members of the Oil and Water Don't Mix campaign ([oilandwaterdontmix.org](http://oilandwaterdontmix.org)).

In another strategy, three CCDP members lamented that the Cheboygan community was dying. As we have experienced in our community, Cheboygan lost their community hospital and found themselves governed under Republican county commissioners and city council. They turned their discouragement into action and decided to meet weekly with business owners, nonprofit owners, and Republicans. From those efforts "Bring It! Cheboygan" (BIC) campaign was born. This group now boasts 500 volunteers who lend a hand for any activity or group in the community. For example, a local church distributes backpacks to school children and needed help with the giveaways, so BIC volunteers go and help distribute. Joanne listed a handful of initiatives that members of the CCDP through the BIC participate in:

- welcoming attendees of an antique car club event to town;
- planting and maintaining flower gardens throughout the city;
- Art vision around the county and primarily in the city.
- and any activity to help support local businesses, the city and county.

As a result of BIC's success, the city council was convinced to become a "Michigan Main Street" district even though it involves generating matching dollars from local government, a common stumbling block. Cheboygan has now achieved Level 2 of the program through the Michigan Main Street DDA.

As a culmination of the CCDP's involvement in all these various efforts, they realized the power they have in the city and county. That knowledge propelled them to join the trails committee on city and county level, and now have implemented biking, birding, walking and snowmobile trails. They were able to convince city and county leaders that these trails provided access for tourism which in turn would boost local businesses. They have received a "Pure Michigan" designation on one trail and is pursuing this designation for other waterways.



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# ICDP Committee Roundup

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## Upcoming Meetings & Important Dates

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### MARCH

18: Brew & Stew

4—6 pm on Zoom

20: MDP Leadership Training  
for officers

### APRIL

6: Monthly General

Membership Meeting

5:30—7 pm on Zoom

15: Brew & Stew

4—6 pm on Zoom

### MAY

5 Monthly General

Membership Meeting

5:30—7 pm on Zoom

20: Brew & Stew

4—6 pm on Zoom

### JUNE

1: Monthly General

Membership Meeting

5:30—7 pm on Zoom

17: Brew & Stew

4—6 pm on Zoom

## Bylaws—*Carole Bleau*

The committee reviewed revisions to the proposed bylaws changes that were presented at the February general membership meeting. After that meeting, there was considerable discussion regarding proposed changes to the membership section. Those revisions were presented at the March general membership meeting. There was a unanimous vote to approve bylaws as recommended.

## Campaign—*Jim Mortimer*

The committee continues to work on a research project with 14 counties' data on increased Democrat voter turnout. Counties that had a strong slate of down ballot candidates got voters to vote not just because of the top of the ticket. ICDP needs to find candidates for local offices such as county commission and state representative. The committee is also strategizing about how to help those candidates raise funds to run professional campaigns. It is a goal to conduct general fundraising on the candidates' behalf.

## Communications — *Cindy Schwedler & Sue Duncan*

The Communications Committee had a busy February with at least 4 published Letters to The Editor (LTE) that were connected with our committee with Democratic viewpoints. Three LTEs were recorded in February and two were broadcast. An article on January's grocery giveaway donation for the Food Bank in Oscoda made the paper in early February and was also published in the "What's Happenin" paper in March. The committee officially established a budget of \$500 (for March – August) and have ad copy ready for the classified section of the Oscoda Press and the Iosco News Herald. We will also run a display ad in the "What's Happenin" paper starting in March. Duane Breijak attended our February committee meeting to provide technical help archiving the LTEs. He created a Google sheet for us to save PDFs to. Once the LTEs are saved in that place, Duane can use them on our website, Facebook, and Instagram pages. We are looking to fill the calendar with LTEs and viewpoints for March publication and broadcast. Currently, the only activity scheduled is Gloria Brooks' Viewpoint on grief and loss during the pandemic that was broadcast on March 1 during the noon news segment on WKJC. If you have something to share, please contact one of us so we can add you to the schedule.

## Environmental—*Jim Mortimer*

The committee has been working on creating a resolution that the Iosco County Commission can use to address Line 5, the Enbridge pipeline that runs under the Straits of Mackinaw. Leonard Page with the *Straits of Mackinaw Alliance*, who wrote the MDP position on Line 5, is assisting the committee to develop a position statement on Line 5 through the lens of any impact on the economy and jobs.

# ICDP Committee Roundup *Cont'd*

## **Community Action Committee**—*Susan Mayer & Sue Duncan*

The Community Action Committee recently sent suggested guidelines to nine ICDP members who generously offered to attend meetings of townships, cities, or county organizations both political and civic minded. This effort at networking, information gathering and sharing of democratic values is where the best outcomes for change will occur, according to data from five NE Michigan counties data obtained in the last election. The *Iosco Exploration Trail* organization had a letter in last week's Iosco County Herald newspaper seeking to recruit volunteers. Please consider volunteering or joining a local governance board or civic organization. Will you help move our area to greater demand values by becoming involved? The commitment is not a big one, and the level and type of involvement chosen is in your control. Contact Co-chairs Sue Duncan at [susanduncan12951@gmail.com](mailto:susanduncan12951@gmail.com)/989-701-5471 or Susan Mayer at [susanmayer1109@gmail.com](mailto:susanmayer1109@gmail.com)/440-915-6057 to volunteer.

## **Events & Service**— *Monica Peach & Carole Bleau*

The E/S committee has initiated an Adopt-A-Highway project, the roadside cleaning activity with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). The committee will select from three locations available in Iosco county; each is a 1 – 2-mile stretch. It's free to participate and the ICDP will have its name on a roadside marker sign. We would commit to clean up dates 3 times/yr. with the first date scheduled in May. It generally takes a group of 6 volunteers an hour to clean a 2-mile stretch. Dates to follow in a future newsletter. In addition, we are considering participation in the Adopt-A-Forest, another cleanup project is through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to clean illegal dumping sites. Dates to follow.

The committee also wants to remind members that Father Tim at Emmanuel Mission Church's homeless shelter in Oscoda needs help with landscaping later this spring. In addition, Father Tim said that the church hopes to raise enough donations to buy an industrial size refrigerator for approximately \$800 - \$1200; and he is looking for a crew of volunteers to do some changes in the kitchen area. The Committee will review if ICDP is able to contribute a donation towards the refrigerator purchase. More details to follow. If you are interested in volunteering for any of these projects, please contact one of the E/S Committee chairs to sign up.

## **Member Recruitment & Retention**—*Laurie Miles*

Laurie Miles reported that 138 people have renewed their membership and received a 2021 membership card. The committee announced that the membership renewal dates will be changed to be the date of the member's last membership form filed. For instance, if a member joined in September 2020, the membership will be valid until September 30, 2021. Renewal notices will be sent one month prior. The membership form will also be posted on the website and a sample form was provided for feedback.

### ICDP Leadership

Please feel free to contact an Executive Board member with any ideas, questions or information that would help in the work of the party.

#### ICDP Executive Board Members

Carole Bleau – **Chair**

[bleausy@icloud.com](mailto:bleausy@icloud.com)

Józef Drozdowski – **Vice Chair**

[drozdow@gmail.com](mailto:drozdow@gmail.com)

Laurie Miles – **Secretary**

[lauriemiles@yahoo.com](mailto:lauriemiles@yahoo.com)

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[coffcreek@yahoo.com](mailto:coffcreek@yahoo.com)

Kathleen Davidson – **Trustee**

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Cindy Schwedler – **Trustee**

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#### Committee Chairs

**Bylaws**—Carole Bleau

**Campaign**—Jim Mortimer

**Communication**—Cindy Schwedler & Sue Duncan

**Community Action**—Sue Duncan & Susan Mayer

**Digital Organizing**- Duane Breijak

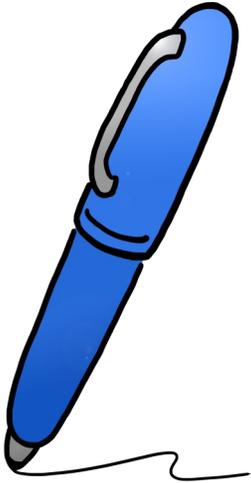
**Environmental**: Jim Mortimer

**Events & Service**—Monica Peach & Carole Bleau

**Member Recruitment & Retention**—Laurie Miles

## Letters to the Editor

Here are recent Letters to the Editor written by ICDP members as published in the *Iosco County Herald* and *Oscoda Press*.



### Following science has won in the fight against COVID-19

Editor,

When we are properly raised as children, on the way to becoming adults, we learn to celebrate victories and admit mistakes.

If we are lucky enough to be raised with a sense of moral compass and civic responsibility we grow up in a way that keeps others' needs and problems ahead of our own and we learn to serve. One of the most difficult lessons to be learned is to recognize when we are wrong, and then to accept our errors and learn. Those who do not emerge from childhood to adulthood fail to learn this important lesson.

Thursday our governor announced that Michigan's success in reducing incidence of new cases of COVID-19, producing a decline of hospitalized patients and loss of life has given us the opportunity to reopen most competitive high school sports with due consideration to continued vigilance and public health preventative practices.

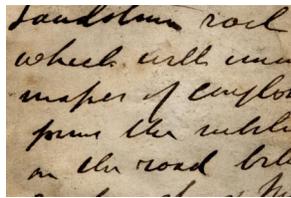
Last week we witnessed the same success of tough public policy with the opening of indoor dining services, with proper cautions and public health restrictions. We are slowly moving in the right direction for a cautious, safe return

to normal. It is a safe normal that we all want.

Those who have viciously and persistently attacked our governor and her administration have been wrong. Following science has won. If we compare our success to Indiana, Ohio or Wisconsin the evidence is obvious. Following science, taking the slings and arrows of the misinformed, and staying the course are hallmarks of Governor Whitmer's leadership.

If we are not accepting and grateful we do not deserve to live in a place where leadership actually cares about the people more than the profits or privileges of the few. Hail to the Victors.

—Richard L. Douglass  
Tawas City



### We are all better than this

Editor,

We are all listening to the trial on impeachment and a time line and defense of what happened.

Weeks before the event, speeches, claims of election fraud, claiming that he could not lose. All were investigated by the courts.

The planning of the event, donors who donated to pay for the event on the Ellipse. People who gathered from all over the country.

The speech that all of us could hear on that morning.

He watched the mob head for the Capitol down Pennsylvania Avenue and did not stop them, instead went to the White House and watched on TV.

If it was a mistake I think he would have headed for the Capitol steps and turned the mob away.

The mob then attacked Capi-

tol Guards that had protected the president for four years and some whom he must have known personally. He aimed them at his own loyal vice president with guns and nooses.

A defense that they want to claim is others have behaved as mobs in different situations. If anyone I knew said I can break the law because I saw someone else do it. I would tell them you will have to be responsible for your own actions. There is no defense that says, if someone else does it, I can too.

If I incite others to break the law then I am an accessory to that crime.

If I then hide while they are committing a crime that I incited, then I am a coward and an accessory.

This was a sitting president who had taken an oath to uphold the defense of the United States.

Republicans in Congress now claim that he cannot be convicted because their constituents still think inciting insurrection is OK, or what the former president does is always permitted.

I do not know anyone who is a Republican who would personally condone these actions by their friends or family and especially by a president of the other party in power.

Please listen and think about this, as our Democracy is being eroded.

We are all better than this.

—Betty Fahselt  
East Tawas

## Water is a human right. It's time we start treating it as one

Stay home, wear a mask, keep your distance, and wash your hands. These critical safety measures were imprinted onto our brains nearly a year ago when the covid-19 pandemic began. Handwashing to prevent the spread of this deadly virus may seem like a no-brainer; after all, it's what we've done for decades to prevent the spread of disease and maintain hygiene. But some of the same governments telling people to wash their hands can still legally shut off their water if they can't afford the bill. In most places in the United States, water departments source, sanitize and provide water for homes and businesses. Most are public utilities. A few, regrettably, are private, for-profit systems. Almost all are monopolies.

This system gives them the power to develop harmful habits and ignore calls to change. In Michigan's 13th Congressional District alone, more than 3,000 families have been cut off from water access. But this is not just a Michigan issue. In Virginia, more than 500,000 residents are behind on water bills.

Food and Water Watch reports that as of January 2021, 56 percent of Americans — or 183 million people — live in states without any shutoff protections during this pandemic. Last year, only 20 states banned disconnections. Eleven of those moratoriums have already expired, and at least 226 private water utilities have also allowed their moratoriums to expire. This pandemic didn't create this crisis; it just made it worse. As with many systemic inequalities, Covid-19 shined a spotlight on the suffering of many of our neighbors. Indeed, the lack of access to affordable, clean water has been a problem in our society for decades. Last month, along with 77 of our colleagues, we introduced a measure that would create a \$1.5 billion fund for local communities to assist with paying water bills for low-income residents. This legislation, supported by nearly 100 organizations, would require all cities and counties to reconnect service and impose a shutoff moratorium to receive federal funding. These requirements will not only help residents and local governments in the short term

### About the Authors

This letter to the editor of the Washington Post was written by Debbie Dingell and Rashida Tlaib, both Democrats, who represent Michigan's 12th and 13th Congressional Districts, respectively, in the U.S. House of Representatives.

This op-ed was shared during the recent MDP Spring Convention in February.

***“Indeed, the lack of access to affordable, clean water has been a problem in our society for decades” Debbie Dingell & Rashida Tlaib***

In Pennsylvania, it's 183,000. Across the country, many have seen water rate increases of 30 percent in less than a decade. Meanwhile, millions of workers have lost their jobs in the past year. The root causes of water inaccessibility were exposed by this public health crisis, and they cannot be ignored. And for many Americans, water shutoffs are often only the beginning. Even after they pay off outstanding debt or arrange for payment plans, reconnection fees further penalize them. We need to move beyond treating missed payments as a moral failing and acknowledge the reality of families struggling as they try to make ends meet. As water bills continue to skyrocket, governments routinely fail to meet their end of the bargain by not investing in infrastructure upgrades. As we know all too well in Michigan, the people of Flint are still suffering the deadly consequences of ignored, crumbling water systems and indifference from officials trying to save a few pennies. Residents were paying to maintain an antiquated system, only to be poisoned.

by providing access to water and funding to assist our front-line communities; they will also provide long-term solutions that will ensure everyone permanently has access to clean, affordable water.

Most Americans have taken this virus seriously. They wear masks. They socially distance. And they wash and sanitize. They stay away from friends and take care of family. Most of this involves little to no help from the government. So that same government cannot make it harder for us to comply with basic common sense. Our families need access to clean, affordable and safe water to combat the spread of the coronavirus, maintain good hygiene, and avoid other deadly viruses, bacteria, and illnesses. In the wealthiest nation on earth, there should not be a single family without water. We've had enough of punishing people for being poor, leaving them susceptible to this deadly pandemic and other daily dangers simply because they cannot afford their water bill. It is time to take our public health seriously and guarantee water as a human right.



## How Can You Fix It if You Don't Know How It Got Broke? Part 2 - *Richard Douglass*

### Guest Columnist Series

This installment of How Can You Fix It...Broke?, "The Accidental Healthcare System", is the second of five articles that Richard Douglass, ICDP member, is writing about the lack of access to healthcare in our community.



In the January newsletter, I shared lessons learned from my 53 years of direct involvement, research, and teaching in the healthcare system. I acknowledge that if I read this information for the first time in the context of a modern, industrial, highly educated society, I would assume that it was fiction. Rational people would not create the system we live and work with today in the United States. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

After WWII, several forces pushed us to the "system" that we have. GI's returning from war became accustomed to getting medical care, vision, and dental care on demand when they were in uniform. Did you know, using today's standards for nutrition and health, that more than 20% of all men inducted into the military between 1941 and 1945 were malnourished? Or that approximately 11% of all inducted men tested positive for syphilis? Before WWII, more than half of all babies were born at home; most people knew that hospitals were dangerous places full of diseased people. Infant mortality was high, life expectancy was not great, and in fact we were not a healthy nation coming out of the Great Depression. Lack of antibiotics until 1940-1942 within the general population left many bacterial diseases, such as bacterial pneumonia and syphilis or infected wounds from accidents or trauma without effective treatments.

During the second world war, penicillin and other new antibiotics became a secret weapon. Wounded warriors were treated and sent back to the fight. Combat mortality was cut by 75% over WWI. Axis forces, especially the Japanese, without access to antibiotics died from wounds that we were able to treat. Production of penicillin, sometimes in repurposed beer brewing plants, provided antibi-

otics to our civilians who grew the crops and produced war material in our factories. Leading causes of death, including dozens of common bacterial diseases and categories of infection, all but disappeared in short order. When GI's came home, they were not keen on giving up access to medical care. After returning from war, the troops returned to their old jobs or went to college on the newly minted GI Bill. The "temporary labor" of women in 'heavy industry' (ship, vehicle, coal, and oil production to name a few) was sent home to take care of the house and usher in the Baby Boom beginning in 1946.

Labor contracts in steel, aviation, ship building, automotive, mining, and related sectors became a significant issue at that time. In essence, corporations said to returning GI's "Welcome home and thank you for your service. We saved your job for you. How about 10 cents an hour more than you earned in 1941?" Feeling insulted and unhappy with the proposed wages, union leaders insisted on improved compensation. The ensuing labor unrest was a dark post-war chapter in our history. Labor prevailed and wages went up dramatically compared to pre-war levels. When those first contracts expired, however, organized labor had a new demand. Texas' public teachers' union embraced a new kind of insurance: Blue Cross & Blue Shield for physician services and hospital care. This insurance would establish access to medical care that was much better than the cash & carry method that medical care was delivered, more like care-on-demand in the service. Organized labor wanted Blue Cross & Blue Shield plans nationwide since the troops remembered the type of access to care they had during the war and wanted it in their new lives.

*Continued next page*

## The Accidental Healthcare System *Continued*

On the heels of WWII, however, the global confrontation with USSR's brand of communism and the solidification of communism in China led to the Korean War. President Truman had a war on his hands and the U.S.A. was the only nation left standing and able to confront communism's spread on the Korean peninsula. There was no place for labor unrest in heavy industry; there were tanks, armored personnel carriers, new jet aircraft, and the arsenal of democracy needed to get to work. Industries wanted the billions of dollars for Federal contracts but were hesitant to concede health insurance as a matter of labor contracts. It was a standoff and strikes became likely.

President Truman set the wheels in motion for a strike-free settlement, and then newly elected president Dwight Eisenhower finished the deal. Workers would get their health insurance as a contractual matter and would return to work immediately. They could go home and brag to the rank and file that they won. Corporate executives could go home to their stockholders and boards and brag that they also won and there would be no hit on the bottom line. How? Because health insurance premiums paid to private health insurance companies on behalf of the workers would be 100% deductible off corporate Federal tax liabilities. Wow, what a deal!

This meant that insurance premiums were paid by all of us. Tax deductions simply offset other Federal tax revenues (think income tax) and the cost of buying private health insurance for unionized labor was born by the entire U.S. taxpaying population, including millions of workers who were not members of unions, agricultural workers, or small business owners. The next contract cycle embraced health insurance for families of the workers. Why not? It's tax deductible!

The impact of this sequence of events was re-

markable. Think about most major cities in the U.S. and the tallest buildings in the downtown areas. What are the names of the tallest and grandest structures and when were they built? You will find the names of the largest providers of health insurance. A new industry was born because we needed to mobilize for war and didn't have time or interest in finding an alternative, such as the national health system that the British were creating at the same time. Foregone federal revenues underwrote the U.S. health care enterprise during a moment in history when we simply couldn't imagine that anyone else could do anything better. This sequence of historical events has had implications that haunt us today.

If a 'system' is defined as an assembly of parts that communicate and depend upon each other then we do not have a system at all. We have the results of an historical accident. Entrepreneurial interests, competition among providers, differences in medical philosophies and raging competition in the emerging drug and pharmaceutical industry reduced the free flow of information, created uneven distribution of medical innovation, and instituted varying degrees of adequacy and quality of care across the nation. Federal money through the 1948 Hill Burton Act ensured that nearly every Congressional District got its own hospital, vastly increasing the numbers of facilities. But hospitals at that time were still a Mom & Pop operation in many places because the highest levels of talent in medicine, nursing, pharmaceuticals, and administration were concentrated near large cities, as they had always been. The United States, unlike any other industrialized nation, based insurance coverage for most citizens on their employment, and the ability or willingness of their employer to purchase insurance from a private health insurance industry. Millions of Americans were left out until Medicare and Medicaid were finally passed ten years later.

### Next month

I will discuss how Medicare was designed to provide hospital care for the elderly, how Medicaid was designed to provide medical care for low-income Americans, and what happened that now challenges the ability of these programs to take care of those of us who were left out from the private, union-driven, employer-based, health insurance programs that came out of the 1950's.





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## About Us

The Iosco County Democratic Party is a group of passionate Iosco County Democrats who are working together to change our country's leadership throughout the Michigan legislature and in Washington DC. We believe in truth, justice, and the American way.

[www.ioscocountydems.org](http://www.ioscocountydems.org)



## ICDP Newsletter

Gloria Brooks, Editor

Jim Mortimer, Associate Editor

### Special thanks to our proofreaders:

Carole Bleau, Michael Brooks, & Patsy Mortimer

## Publishing Schedule

### Articles due:

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# March General Membership Meeting Notes

- Iosco County now has 11 county delegates for the MDP Convention, an increase of two new delegates because of increased voter turnout.
- Cindy Schwedler and Carole Bleau have been researching the impact of redistricting. They determined that the county could have up to 15 county commissioners and currently there are only 5. Carole is requesting members to join redistricting commission as Carole is the only Democrat on the commission so far. The rural caucus had Mark Brewer, former MDP chair, speak at a recent meeting, and he offered to assist counties regarding redistricting.
- Carole is ordering 15 – 20 “Support Whitmer” signs from the rural caucus; more information to follow on how to purchase them.
- Carole is now the secretary of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District – Congratulations!
- Jim Mortimer continues to attend the Iosco County Commissioners meetings twice a month. He encouraged others to go to the county website for Zoom instructions and agenda. Agenda is posted 2 hours before the meeting. Takeaways from the last meeting was that the Develop Iosco organization needs new members. Terry Dutcher, county commissioner, is a member of that group; however, some members have resigned due to relocation out of the area. This is an economic development group with representation from major employers and the chamber; it's a great opportunity for Democrats to get into a group that is pro-business and expanding our business footprint. If you are interested, please visit their website ([www.develop-iosco.org](http://www.develop-iosco.org)) and reach out to Jim.
- Cindy attended the Rules committee at the MDP convention. She also attended the rural caucus with 100 attendees. *United Rural Democrats* is a new group who's willing to speak at meetings. Cindy attended the environmental caucus meeting which reviewed MI Senate Bill 142 and asked for support. She also shared information on Enbridge's Line 5 and concerns about its continued operation.
- Richard Douglass and Jim Mortimer have been developing strategies regarding increased access to healthcare following Richard's articles in *The Beacon*. They seek to focus on northern Michigan and draw local healthcare leaders and specific data for northeastern Michigan since we are designated as a healthcare desert. Their goal is to have Rep. Dan Kildee host a legislative field hearing for rural health. They are seeking a Republican party representative to join Rep. Kildee. There are other issues related to lack of access to healthcare services in rural communities including emergency responsiveness, travel expenses, lack of access to mental health services. August is being proposed as the field hearing date. Richard and Jim will provide additional updates when available.
- Jaime Brant from the MDP's Project 83 reported that the voter protection team received a list of voters that were being removed from voter rolls. Calls were initiated to 58,000 people identified as Democrats. The MI Secretary of State office removed voters on March 1 but calls are continuing to people on the list to see if they are actually voters or if they moved out of state. Iosco only has 37 people who haven't been contacted yet, and Jaime requested volunteers to assist with the calls.

*Gloria Brooks, Editor*