



## Michigan ROUNDUP

### Legislative Week in Review

- Although the risk to public health was negligible, the discovery of hypodermic syringes on the shore of Lake Michigan has spurred the governor and legislature to speed up a search for better ways to regulate and dispose of **medical waste**. The Senate Committee on Health Policy will meet next Tuesday to hear testimony on several legislative solutions. Two bills introduced by Sen. John Kelly (D-Detroit) would define medical waste and require registration and regulation of haulers and others who handle it through disposal. Sen. Vern Ehlers (R-Grand Rapids) is preparing to introduce bills that would regulate hospital incinerators, make medical littering a felony, prohibit placing dangerous waste in dumpsters, regulate disposal of body fluids by mortuaries, and control disposal of medical waste by mental health institutions. The governor has urged adoption of stiff penalties for dumping medical waste and for registration of haulers.
- Both the House and Senate have moved toward approval of a 12-bill package designed to improve **truck safety**. The House will take up three Senate bills on Tuesday. The legislation would raise licensing standards for truck drivers, increase fines for overweight loads and traffic violations, prohibit use of retreaded tires on heavy trucks, establish reciprocal registration fees with other states, create a truck safety fund, and establish a trucking safety commission in the Department of State Police. The Senate Transportation Committee today took up nine House bills regulating truck loads, requiring annual inspections for haulers of flammable materials, requiring detailed truck accident reports, and imposing stiffer penalties for equipment violations.
- CountyCare, Wayne County's **health maintenance organization for the needy**, will begin operation October 1. Four companies have signed contracts requiring them to provide medical services to about 50,000 residents at a charge to the county of about \$73 per patient each month.

### Political News

- The Republican-controlled Senate Fiscal Agency says the 1987-88 fiscal year will end September 30 with the state's realizing a **budget surplus** of \$100 million, but the Department Management and Budget says there will be just \$11.5 million left over when books are closed. Both sides stuck to their guns this week when the Senate Appropriations Committee interrogated Kevin Riper, DMB deputy director, about the lack of reports on monthly estimates of revenue receipts. Riper said his department stands by its estimate, saying unexpected increases in lottery revenues and some taxes would be offset by shortfalls elsewhere. Douglas Roberts, director of the Senate Fiscal Agency, also defended his revenue estimates, insisting that only tax withholding revenue would show a slight decrease.
- Department of Management and Budget Director Shelby Solomon announced this week the creation of an **office of strategic planning and program evaluation** to monitor effectiveness of programs and to determine the effect of current spending on future budgets. Thomas Clay, current director of the Office of the Budget, will run the new planning unit, using current department staff.
- In **certificate of need** legislation, HB 5145 (creating a standards commission) and SB 64 (establishing the regulation threshold) are now in conference committees. The major point of difference in HB 5145 continues to be the manner of appointment of commission members; the points of differences in SB 64 are the thresholds for clinical and nonclinical services and facilities. SB 948 (exempting CON standards from rule making) is on second reading in the House. All three bills must be passed and signed by the governor before HB 4525 (permitting swing-beds) and HB 5575 (revising state health planning), which were signed in August, can take effect on October 1.
- Richard Whitmer, president of **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan**, said this week that the appointment of nine vice presidents and three assistant vice presidents indicates that the company has cleared a major hurdle in rebuilding its management team in the wake of charges that funds had been misspent. The new appointees replace nine persons who took early retirement.