

'Blues' rules at issue**Mental health professionals battle over cash**

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

A suburban city hall is a strange place for a battle between Michigan's psychologists and psychiatrists.

But that's what happened Monday as State Rep. David Hollister (D-Lansing), chairman of the house mental health committee, called together representatives of the warring professional camps, Blue Cross-Blue Shield and the United Auto Workers, which bargained for mental health care coverage in their contracts with the auto makers.

Westland may have been a new,

unexpected battleground, but the issues have hardly changed in 3½ years of debate.

ON THE SURFACE the issue is this: Psychologists, who hold PhDs and are licensed by the state, want to be able to be directly reimbursed by the Blues. According to state law, though, in order to be reimbursed directly by the Blues, the psychologist's therapy must be supervised by a psychiatrist, who is a fully-accredited medical doctor.

Psychologists claim they are better prepared to treat their clients. They say their therapy, which they say does not depend on drugs or

hospitalization, would be cheaper in the long run. It is there where fringe issues muddy the water.

"WE HAVEN'T gotten to the point where we can agree on anything," said Hollister, who introduced House Bill 6196 to allow the Blues to directly reimburse fully-licensed psychologists.

"Every meeting we've had, there's been more conflicting testimony."

"There's just no point in writing a bill if we can't even agree to the principles of the bill," he said. Dr. William E. Kirk, president of

the Michigan Psychiatric Society and director of the Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital's department of child psychiatry, said the bill "creates more problems than it solves."

"There are just too many bad things about this bill," Dr. Kirk said, calling HB 6196 a bill that "divides the professions."

"Instead of supporting one another, we appear to be fighting one another," he said.

THE PSYCHOLOGISTS' task force, a Detroit-based interest group, is pressing for the right to be directly reimbursed without the supervision of a psychiatrist.

Task force materials claim that "where direct payments are made, there's no evidence that increased costs or risks result."

"To the contrary," say task force statements, "evidence suggests that direct payments to consulting psychologists result in fewer claims for hospitalized care and fewer total dollars expended for mental health services."

COST CONTAINMENT recently has emerged from a tangle of tangled issues surrounding Hollister's bill, said Ken Tannenbaum, president of Health Systems Group, Inc. of Ann Arbor, a health policy consulting firm.

Tannenbaum, a former state deputy insurance commissioner, said directly reimbursing psychologists can help reduce unnecessary hospitalization.

"Several medical researchers have concluded," Tannenbaum said, "that, on the average, 75 per cent of in-hospital psychiatric care is unnecessary."

"In 1976," he continued, "the Blues paid out \$43 million in hospital costs for psychiatric care. Direct reimbursement to certified consulting psychologists, who do not use hospital facilities and, indeed, cannot admit patients, can result in dramatic reductions in hospital costs."

Retarded need advocates

After spending part of their lives in an institution, mentally retarded persons who move into the community need friends to show them how to cope with life, to help them shop or take them to a ball game.

Citizen Advocacy is the program that tries to help developmentally disabled people find friends in their community. It is shared relationship between an advocate (mature, capable volunteer) and a protégé (a person with a developmental disability). Some advocates provide the emotional support found in shared social experiences. Others solve problems or provide practical learning experiences.

The Citizen Advocacy office provides training, introduces the volunteer and the person with the disability, provides guidance and follow-up and information on community resources.

To learn more, contact the Greater Dearborn Advocacy Services for the Developmentally Disabled at 555-0425.

Teen-agers can enter contest

Girls from 13 through 17 are eligible to enter the eighth annual Michigan National Teen-ager pageant to be held in the Hoyt Conference Center at Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti May 4-6.

The pageant is the official state finals to the Miss National Teen-ager pageant to be held in Atlanta next August.

The Michigan winner will receive a \$500 cash scholarship, a full Barbi-zon modeling course scholarship and an all-expense paid trip to Atlanta to compete for the national prizes.

Those interested in entering may write to Mr. and Mrs. G.P. Scarborough, 3415 Brookshire, Pensacola, Fla., 32503.

All breeds may try weight pull

A weight pulling contest for all breeds, sponsored by the Alaskan Malamute Club of Greater Detroit, will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 12, in the American Legion Hall, Post 345, 31775 Grand River, Farmington.

The event, sanctioned for certification, will be held outside, weather permitting. The pull will follow an obedience match, which will be open to pure bred Alaskan Malamutes.

Interest/Checking Plans.

What they are. What they aren't.

Are they right for you?

What they are.

You've been hearing a lot lately about the new Interest/Checking Plans that are available to bank customers. These new plans have come about because of revisions in Federal banking regulations that permit banks to automatically transfer funds from a savings account to a checking account with the customer's prior approval. With this change two new benefits are available to bank customers. They are:

- The Interest/Checking Plan combines the features of a \$0 balance checking account with those of a regular savings account. With it 5% annual interest can be earned on the money you would normally keep in your checking account. As checks are written, funds are automatically transferred from savings to checking.
- The other new plan assures protection against the occasional checking account overdraft by drawing on funds in an especially designated savings account.

These advantages may sound good to you and they can be. But before you decide to sign up for either account, read a little further.

What they aren't.

First of all, the Interest/Checking Plan is definitely not for everybody. Accounts offered by most banks will carry a different level of service charges than in the past.

To understand the reason for this, it will be helpful to know the two basic ways in which a bank compensates its customers for the use of their funds. Up to now the majority of bank customers have received "indirect interest" on their checking account; that is, the amount paid in service charges was probably less than it cost the bank to service the account, especially if the customer kept a relatively small balance and wrote a great many checks. In absorbing this cost, the bank has really been paying "indirect interest."

Under the new Interest/Checking Plan customers will be earning "direct interest" paid at a fixed rate for the use of their money. Because of this, your bank will be more likely to charge for the expenses incurred in servicing checking accounts. Typically, this charge will be a fee for each check written plus a flat fixed monthly charge for the statement. The bank may also establish an average balance above which service charges are waived. This method of charging for the service is not too unlike some methods presently used. However, the level of charges and required balance can be expected to be somewhat higher than in the past.

With this explanation of the Interest/Checking Plan you may wish to evaluate its advantages from your own particular situation.

Are they right for you?

Evaluation is largely a matter of comparing what the new service will cost you in charges and fees with the amount you will earn in interest on your deposits. Just follow these simple steps:

INTEREST/CHECKING WORKSHEET

1. Determine the number of checks you typically write each month.
2. Figure the amount of checking service charges you would pay each month. (To compute this, determine how much your bank will charge for each check and the monthly statement charge, if any. Multiply the check charge by the average number of checks you write. Finally, add the statement charge to get your monthly service charge.)
3. Estimate your average checking account balance. (One easy way to approximate this in many cases is to add the beginning balance on your statement to the ending balance and divide by two.)
4. Estimate the interest you would earn in one month. (Multiply your average checking balance by 5% and divide by 12.)
5. Subtract your service charges from the amount of interest earned.

If the amount of interest earned is less than the service charge, you will not benefit. If the amount of interest is greater than the service charge, the plan may be to your advantage.

If the comparison above indicates that interest/checking will not be beneficial, you can continue with your present checking account plan or you may want to make some adjustments in the way you manage your money by following these simple suggestions:

- Combine the balances from other checking and savings accounts. This may give you the necessary funds to cover your checking account charges. A larger average balance in your interest/checking account assures a greater return.
- Pay as many bills as possible through pre-authorized automatic payments, reducing the number of checks you write. Examples include payments on mortgage and installment loans, and insurance premiums.
- Arrange with your employer for direct deposit of your paycheck into your savings account. Since all the money is deposited and probably sooner, it will earn you more interest.
- Avoid writing numbers of small checks for minor purchases—miscellaneous groceries, hardware or drug store items. Instead, write a single check for the amount of cash you know you will need.

Even though you've analyzed interest/checking, and perhaps have not found it suited to your needs, there is still the *Overdraft Protection Plan* to consider.

This plan simply covers overdrafts in your checking account—up to the balance in your savings account—by automatically transferring funds from savings to checking as needed. A minimum balance is required by some banks and a fee is normally charged for each such transfer. This plan's principal advantage is to eliminate the embarrassment and inconvenience of returned checks.

If you have further questions about the plans described above, or if you would like to inquire about the Interest/Checking Plan and Overdraft Protection Plan offered by National Bank of Detroit, stop in at a nearby NBD office. One of our representatives will gladly help you determine what is right for you.



Making banking better for you.