

Faxon: 'no' to abortion override

The State House of Representatives this week is expected to take up an effort to override of Gov. James J. Blanchard's veto of a bill that would prohibit state financing of medical abortions.

The Senate last Thursday mustered the two-thirds majority (24) needed to override the veto. The vote was 26-8.

The override came with almost no floor debate.

SUPPORTING the override were three area senators: Doug Cruce, R-Troy; Richard Fessler, R-Union Lake; and R. Robert Geake, R-Northville.

Among area senators, only Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, supported Blanchard.

In the House, 74 votes will be needed to override. Cruce, a former House member, said the effort is still a vote or two short. "It will be difficult for the House to override the governor's veto, but with the threat of legislative recall, lawmakers who normally would vote against SB 136 are reluctant to support measures as controversial as the use of state Medicaid funds for elective abortions," he said.

DEMOCRAT Blanchard and his Republican predecessor, William G. Milliken, vetoed the legislature's attempts to halt medical financing of abortion 12 times. But the legislature has never been able to override the veto.

Both governors have maintained the right to abortion is meaningless to poor women unless medical money is available.

But Right to Life of Michigan, which opposes the measure, recently pointed to a study by a Planned Parenthood Institute showing in two states that 75 percent of poor women who wanted abortions were able to find enough money. RTL said 35 states and the federal government presently do not use government money to finance abortions.

In vetoing the bill, Gov. Blanchard said that failing to provide money would "indirectly and unfairly discriminate against women who happen to be poor."

"The limitation on expenditures for abortion services denies to women who are poor the same freedom of medical choice afforded other women in our society. We cannot separate the legal right to choose this procedure from the opportunity to exercise choice."



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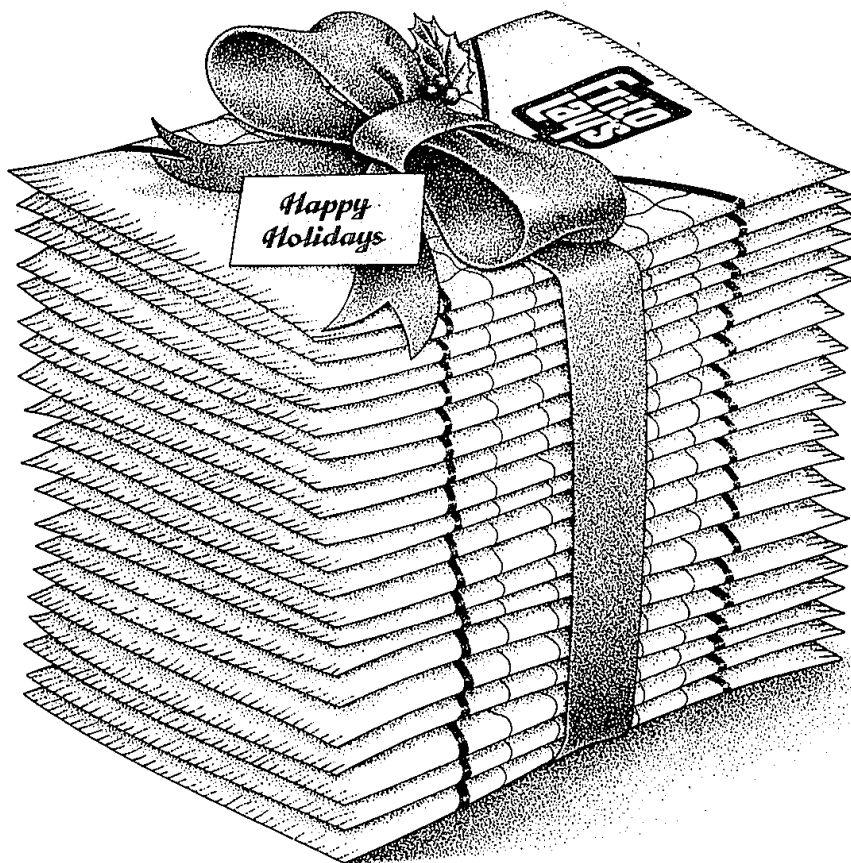
Chelation therapy questioned

The Oakland County Health Division warns that chelation therapy is "not a safe, effective or established treatment for hardening of the arteries. Further scientific studies are necessary."

Chelation therapy using ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid or its sodium salts (EDTA) has been touted as a treatment for atherosclerosis. But questions about its effectiveness and safety have been raised by the American Medical Association's Council of Scientific Affairs, the county office said.

Chelation therapy functions much like a magnet to metal but on a chemical basis. The process, if illustrated, would show calcium being held by the chelation chemicals. The trial tests using EDTA were not well designed nor was a control group used to check the results. As a result, the health division said there was no supporting, scientific evidence that chelation therapy using EDTA has any significant effect on the plaque associated with hardening of the arteries.

The health division also warns that the safety of using EDTA is questionable, especially with people with angina. Kidney problems, irregular heart rhythms and convulsions are some of the side effects, the health division said.



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