Hospitals call malpractice costs 'crippling'

Hospital medical malpractice coverage accounted for more than 70 percent of the increase in hospital costs over the last year, according to a statewide survey conducted by the Michigan Hospital Association (Mild.). "Malpractice costs are cripping hospitals' ability to provide quality health care," said Spencer Johnson, MHA president.

care, said Spencer of the spencer of

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high infant-mortality rate.
"No one's needs are being adequately met under the present system. The MilA remains strong in its conviction that overhauling the malpraetice tort system is the best action that can be taken. We remain optimistic that the Legislature will enact such a measure."

THE AGGREGATE cost of malprac-tice coverage for Michigan hospitals in 1985 totals nearly \$200 million, an av-erage of \$1 million per hospital, MHA said.

Every hospital admission cost \$164

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for medical liability coverage in 1985.

"At a time when hospitals are trying to find means to control health-care costs while maintaining the level of quality, malpractice remains an enormous issue for us," dolarso maillion of hospital revenues going toward malpractice everage. As a basis for comparison, the entire 1985 Medicald budget for hospitals was \$635 million," Johnson added.

THE STUDY also showed that hospitals' malpractice costs had increased 88 percent from 1984 to 1985.

It indicated that hospitals are bearing two-thirds of the total bill for medical malpractice coverage in Michigan. Insurance Bureau reports indicate that Michigan physicians are paying 385 million annually.

Service cutbacks due to the malpractice crisis, as well as difficulties in physician recruiting, were the most fre-

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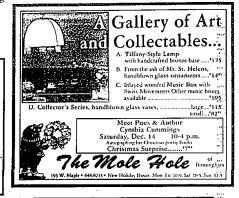
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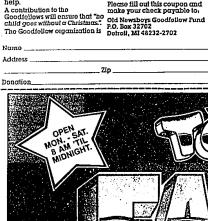
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quently reported results of this grow-ing malpractice crists.

While large and mid-sized hospitals reported the greatest difficulty in at-tracting obstetricians, small and varied hospitals reported a marked difficulty of \$330,000 over the \$230,000 over the \$250,000 over the \$250,





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