Bill offers insurance for adopted youngsters

Adopted children could be covered health insurance the day they entrelled new homes under a bill in a

ter their new homes under a bill in a state Senate committee.

"Basically, If you adopt a child in Michigan, you can't get health insurance for a year" said Rep. Maxine Berman, D-Southfield, sponsor of the corrective House-passed measures.

"That's a hindrance to adopting children, especially older ones," Berman said.

"It's a step forward that's gotta be taken," said Don Marengere, president of Adoption Option, a major supporter of Berman's bills.

HOUSE BILLS 5443-5 would require health insurers to cover adopt-ed children the day they enter their new homes, the same as children born to the family. Handicapped adoptees couldn't be denied cover-

age.
Under Michigan law, an adoption isn't final until a year after placement.
One bill applies to health maintenance organizations, the second to

Blue Cross and the third to independent insurers, Berman sald.
"Many companies will not cover medical situations that our child had prior to his placement in our family," said Maregnere, a Bloomfield Township resident. "Yet if our blo-logical child has the same medical condition, he would receive coverage."

condition, he would receive cover-age."
"A child is a child is a child," said Berman, summarizing her philoso-

CURRENTLY, adopting parents must buy separate coverage for the child or have it covered by govern-mental Medicaid.

mental Medicaid.

"Medicaid is a significant barrier," said Berman. "It's a very difficult process — 42 pages of forms.
"And a lot of dectors don't take
Medicaid. (Rep.) Mary Brown told us
not one dector in Kalamazoo County
accepts Medicaid."
The situation puts parents in the
difficult position of telling adopted
children whom they are treating as a
member of their families, "You can't
go to our doctor, you have to go to
another doctor," she said.

SMART reroutes busses

SMART buses are making one less trip to Southfield and will change one route in Oakland County, according to Albert Martin, general manager of the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation. Route 410 in Southfield will lose one route. Due to relocation of the American Carcer Academy, the 9:55 pm. trip from Southfield and 14 Mile roads will be discontinued. On Route 490 in Farmington Hills, the trip leaving Northland at 4:58 pm. mily fibe rerouted to serve Middlebelt Road between 12 Mile

Road and 14 Mile Road.
Public timetables which reflect these schedule changes are available at the Royal Josk Transit Center, on Sherman Just south of 11 Mile Road In Royal Oak; the SMART Transit Center in the lobby of the First National Building on Woodward Avenue and Cadillac Square in downtown Detroit; and at many city halls, shopping centers and libraries in southeastern Michigan.

SMART's customer information office number is 962-5515 from 6:37 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays.

Marengere said there are about 2,000 adoptions a year in Michigan (of 100,00 live briths). It's possible, said Marengere, for young woman living with her parents to keep the child and have it covered under her parents' Blue Cross policy. But if the child is

placed for adoption, it couldn't be covered under the family policy for a year.

THE BILLS would apply to insurers but not to companies like General Motors which self-insure, he said.

Berman said the HMOs and the

said.

The bills are in the Senate Commerce Committee where independent insurers are continuing to object.

'Basically, if you adopt a child in Michigan, you can't get health insurance for a year.'

- Rep. Maxine Berman D-Southfield

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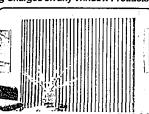
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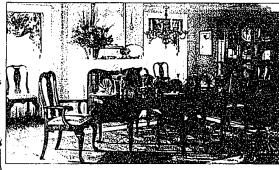
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