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State doesn't need special-interest courts

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Dr. Alan Mindlin correctly identifies high medical malpractice insurance premiums as a serious problem facing our health care system – but misses the mark completely regarding the solution (“Special health courts could heal state’s liability courts,” March 2).

High medical malpractice premiums result from the price-gouging of doctors by their insurance carriers. This attack on doctors can only be solved by real, meaningful insurance reform, not by limiting payments to injured patients.

Lawrence Smars, president of the Physicians Insurance Association of America, admitted to The Detroit News last July that doctors’ premiums rise to make up for lost investment income.

The law allows Michigan doctors to be cheated to make up for bad insurance investments.

The medical malpractice insurance industry enjoys record windfall profits in Michigan. The premium cash collected by major malpractice insurance carriers more than doubled during the last four years, while the money they paid in claims rose less than 6 percent.

While Mindlin claims premiums are rising due to compensation for victims of medical errors, in reality Michigan has the lowest payout to patients of medical errors in the country. Malpractice filings in Wayne County and across Michigan have decreased significantly during the past five years.

Special-interest “health courts” have been a huge failure in Virginia. Families of brain damaged babies and children, and taxpayers, have absorbed huge costs while the insurance industry profits. According to an article in the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch, “Virginia is becoming a safe harbor for bad doctors, due to the law.”

Michigan doctors and their patients need insurance reform, not special-interest courts.

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