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State limits Blue Cross' Medigap hike

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In a victory for 210,000 Michigan senior citizens, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan can raise rates for its supplemental Medicare policies no more than 3.8% -- not the 31.2% sought by the insurer -- the state insurance commissioner ruled Monday.

In seeking the increase, Blue Cross said it has lost \$358 million on the plans, known as Medigap policies, since 2003.

Effective Feb. 1, those with the most popular Medigap plan will pay \$111 monthly, up from \$107.

The rate increase approved by Ken Ross, commissioner of the Office of Financial and Insurance Regulation, is lower than an interim rate hike of 4.7% that Ross approved in August. As a result, Blue Cross will give a \$3.84 refund to anyone with a Medigap policy between Oct. 1 and Jan. 31, 2010.

The insurer has not decided whether to appeal the ruling.
