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#### NCOIL TO EXAMINE PHARMACEUTICAL COSTS AT SUMMER MEETING

**Albany, NY, July 5, 2001** –  NCOIL President Rep. Terry Parke (IL) today announced that the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) will hold a panel discussion entitled, "Pharmaceuticals: Can States Cut Costs?" on Saturday, July 14, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  NCOIL legislators will address the issue of rising prescription drug costs during the 2001 Summer Meeting, scheduled for July 12 through 15 at the Hotel Inter-Continental Chicago.

In making the announcement, Rep. Parke said:

"The rising cost of pharmaceuticals is an issue that affects all Americans, and the elderly in particular.  Prescription drugs are quickly becoming unaffordable.  People are going without necessary medications, or must travel out of the country to buy less expensive drugs.  As legislators, we need to give our constituents other options to ensure that they receive the best health care available.  NCOIL is interested in alternatives for making pharmaceuticals accessible and affordable.  This panel discussion will explore viable methods."

Scheduled to address an audience of 200 state legislators, insurance commissioners, and industry representatives is Sen. Cheryl Rivers (VT), who will speak about two state legislative groups that are attacking the pharmaceutical cost problem.  The Northeast Legislative Association on Prescription Drugs includes the six New England states, New York and Pennsylvania, and was established in 2000 to discuss regional and state activities with regard to prescription drug coverage.  The Northern New England Tri-State Coalition includes Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, and is a regional buying pool.

Also scheduled to speak are Dr. David Kreling, a professor of Social and Administrative Pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin School of Pharmacy, and Richard Cauchi, Health Care Program Manager with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).  Dr. Kreling will present an overview of the underlying factors contributing to rising costs, and will discuss trends in research and development.  Mr. Cauchi will address state efforts and initiatives such as buying co-ops and subsidy programs.

The pharmaceutical industry has also been asked to provide a speaker for the session.

"NCOIL is interested in solutions to the pharmaceutical problem," Rep. Parke said.  "We know that prescription drugs are too expensive.  We know that this is due to a number of factors, including consumer demand, marketing costs, federal mandates and patent protections.  What we need to know now is what we can do to counter costs and improve consumer access.  This panel discussion will shed some light on how best to handle a situation that affects us all."