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STATE INSURANCE LEGISLATORS GEAR UP FOR HEALTH REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

Boston, Massachusetts, July 11, 2010 — This morning here, NCOIL legislators finished the last leg of a veritable boot camp on health insurance reform implementation. The NCOIL Summer Meeting in Boston included 12 hours of sessions on the new *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* and afforded lawmakers the opportunity to ask the hard questions of national experts on how states and the federal government will work together to implement the plan.

Legislators today cleared a final hurdle of the “what’s and why’s” of the recently enacted law by looking at the impacts on other lines of insurance, including coordination and costs. Other meeting sessions included discussions on health reform implementation timelines and responsibilities, challenges and changes ahead for health insurers, state budget impacts of expanded Medicaid rolls, and exploration of health insurance exchanges, using the Massachusetts and Utah case studies.

NCOIL President Rep. Robert Damron (KY), said “NCOIL is all about educating legislators and there is no more timely issue on which to instruct and inform them. States will be challenged in the upcoming years to meet a myriad of responsibilities and obstacles related to reform implementation, including creation of effective state-based insurance exchanges, funding of expanded Medicaid eligibility, and balancing costs and benefits of new health plans. NCOIL will continue to prepare legislators for this vast undertaking at an upcoming NCOIL Annual Meeting.”

Blue-ribbon panels of experts included Marsha Mills, a senior advisor with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); Kansas Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger; Visiting Scholar John Bertko of the Brookings Institution; Scott Pattison of the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO); Rick Fenton of the National Association of State Medicaid Directors (NASMD); Massachusetts State Rep. Peter Koutoujian; Robert Carey of the Public Consulting Group regarding the Massachusetts connector; and Cheryl Smith of the Utah Health Exchange, among many others.

A high point in the meeting was a July 8 keynote luncheon address by Vermont Governor Jim Douglas, chair of the National Governors Association (NGA), entitled *Healthcare Reform: View from a Governor’s Office*. Governor Douglas discussed ongoing NGA healthcare reform efforts and detailed innovative approaches to delivery system reform that his state has employed in recent years to improve health quality and lower overall costs.

Legislators also honed in on the House-passed financial modernization bill, H.R. 4173, the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act*, and heard from Congressman Barney Frank (MA) on the House Financial Services Committee’s 2011 agenda. During an interactive Thursday morning session, Congressman Frank that the Committee would debate optional federal charter (OFC) legislation

next year and advised lawmakers to reach out to their respective Congressional delegations to make sure their voices are heard.

As well as targeting health and financial reform, the NCOIL gathering moved forward on vital model legislation to be sent to the states, including rules governing the treatment of market conduct annual statement data (MCAS), credit default insurance, aftermarket crash parts and auto body steering, healthcare balance billing and dental reimbursements, and workers' comp for truck drivers and couriers.

The NCOIL Annual Meeting will take place from November 18 through 21 in Austin, Texas.

NCOIL is an organization of state legislators whose main area of public policy interest is insurance legislation and regulation. Most legislators active in NCOIL either chair or are members of the committees responsible for insurance legislation in their respective state houses across the country. More information is available at www.ncoil.org.

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