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For immediate release:
Nov. 15, 2011

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Oregon insurance administrator accepts federal position

(Salem) — The Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) announced today Insurance Division Administrator Teresa Miller has accepted a position with the federal agency charged with implementing many of the provisions of the Affordable Care Act, including the development of health insurance exchanges.

She will serve as a senior advisor to Steve Larsen, director of the Center for Consumer Information & Insurance Oversight (CCIIO), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Her last day in the office at the Insurance Division will be Nov. 23, 2011.

“I am so proud of the work the Insurance Division does every day to protect the insurance-buying public, from making sure insurance companies are financially sound so they can pay claims to answering a consumer hotline and helping people resolve complaints against their insurance company or agent,” Miller said.

“As health insurance rates have grown at rates far exceeding wages, we have opened our rate review process, made it more rigorous, created a consumer-friendly website devoted to health insurance rates and tried generally to educate consumers about the underlying costs of health care,” she added. “Oregon is a proven leader in these areas, and I am excited that I will continue to work on the complex issues surrounding health care reform.”

DCBS Senior Policy Advisor Lou Savage will serve as Insurance Division administrator in the interim. The agency plans a nationwide search to fill Miller’s vacancy.

“Under Teresa’s leadership, the Insurance Division has gained national recognition by giving consumers a strong voice,” said Acting DCBS Director Scott L. Harra. “I am confident Lou will continue this momentum through the transition with his experience on legislative and policy issues.”

Miller joined the Insurance Division in July 2008 and began serving as administrator in November of the same year. She has been instrumental in making Oregon’s health insurance rate review process one of the most transparent and detailed in the country. In fact, she was asked to testify before a congressional committee in August about Oregon’s consumer-friendly process. This month, Miller earned an *Excellence in Consumer Advocacy* award by consumer representatives to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. She serves on the Oregon Health Insurance Exchange Board and is active in the NAIC.

In addition to helping consumers with their individual insurance questions and making sure companies can pay claims, the Insurance Division licenses insurance companies and agents, reviews policies for consumer protections, investigates potential violations of insurance law and approves rates on health insurance policies held by about 12 percent of all Oregonians.

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