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For More Information
Wayne Nelson, President
(612) 819-4629

**CA PRESIDENT WAYNE NELSON JOINS NATIONAL RISK POOL
DIRECTOR TO BRIEF CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS ON EXISTING AND
NEW POOLS**

WASHINGTON, DC -- Urging support for a \$75 million appropriation for state high risk health insurance pools for fiscal year 2011, Wayne Nelson, President of Communicating for America, briefed more than 50 House and Senate staff members on the importance of high risk pools for individuals who are otherwise unable to obtain health insurance because of pre-existing conditions.

Nelson was joined by Richard Popper, Director of Insurance Programs for the Office of Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight at the Department of Health and Human Services, who briefed the Hill staffers on the new \$5 billion federal temporary high risk pool that will operate until 2014 when the new Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is implemented. Popper, former director of the Maryland state high risk pool, is responsible



Wayne Nelson, right, and Richard Popper answer questions from congressional staff.

for implementation of the new federal risk pool program.

The new health reform law created the new temporary risk pool that lasts until 2014 when individuals enrolled in the program can transition into new state-based

exchanges that will offer guaranteed health insurance coverage to individuals and small businesses.

“Existing risk pools in 35 states help an estimated 207,000 Americans receive health insurance who are otherwise unable to secure such coverage because of pre-existing conditions. High risk pools have served as the last resort for some of our nation’s sickest and most vulnerable individuals,” said Nelson

“Many of the states use supplemental federal funding to provide subsidies for those unable to afford coverage under existing risk pools and I urge Congress to continue this funding until the new law goes into place,” Nelson told the House and Senate staff members at the briefing.

Popper said the new federal program will offer health insurance for those with pre-existing conditions at the same premium now offered to individuals within each state. Those premiums will vary from state to state.

Popper said the benefit packages would also vary from state to state and that most state programs were in place on August 1. He emphasized that participants have to be US citizens and have been without health insurance for at least six months before they are eligible to join the new program.

He said that 29 states with existing risk pools will administer the new federal program and HHS will administer the programs for the remainder of the country. HHS has negotiated with a single carrier, the Government Employees Health Association, to offer the insurance through the federal program.

The briefing, held in the U.S. Capitol, was sponsored by the Coalition for Affordable Health Coverage (CAHC). CA is a member of the Coalition. Joel White, Executive Director of CAHC, also participated in the briefing.

Communicating for America is a 38-year-old non-partisan and non-profit national association based in Fergus Falls, Minnesota made up of farmers and small businesses all across rural America. For more information on CA, visit their web site at www.communicatingforAmerica.org.

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