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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Wisconsin Commissioner of Insurance's Hypocrisy Exposed
*Slap in the Face Dealt to Wisconsin Health Care Consumers***

Madison, WI – The hypocrisy of the Wisconsin Commissioner of Insurance's office was exposed as the state announced the acceptance of \$38 million in health reform money. The Affordable Care Act includes the creation of insurance exchanges, and Wisconsin's new "Early Innovator" grant will facilitate that process. On February 11, 2011, the Commissioner's Office terminated the Consumer Assistance Program saying it was "a waste of taxpayer money." Bobby Peterson, Public Interest Lawyer at ABC for Health, said "Establishing exchanges without consumer assistance is handing a blank check to the insurance industry." Peterson continued, "What puzzles me is that OCI and the insurance industry should want accurate information for consumers about their public and private coverage choices, prices, and all the variables that support an efficient insurance market."

ABC for Health delivered an Open Letter to Commissioner Nickel. The letter states that the recent decision to accept *this* health reform money, "fully exposes your thoughtless and politically motivated decision to terminate the Consumer Assistance Program in Wisconsin," calling the decision one that fails the people of Wisconsin. The letter continues, "As you should know, Commissioner Nickel, your baseless termination of the Consumer Assistance Program means virtually no assistance for over half our insured population in self-funded ERISA health plans and much more limited assistance for individuals recently laid off from work, families facing bureaucratic hurdles with the BadgerCare programs or other health coverage programs... Wisconsin health care consumers deserve better."

The full text of the letter is available at the following link:

<http://www.safetyweb.org/healthwatchwi/pressReleases/nickel021711.pdf>

ABC for Health is a Wisconsin-based, nonprofit, public interest law firm dedicated to linking children and families, particularly those with special health care needs, to health care benefits and services. ABC for Health's mission is to provide information, advocacy tools, legal services and expert support needed to obtain, maintain, and finance health care coverage and services.

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