



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 11, 2011

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**State Claims Board Reviews Consumer Assistance Grant Termination**

*Revisiting Commissioner Ted Nickel's Decision to Terminate Consumer Assistance Funds*

**Madison, WI** – Public Interest Law Firm ABC for Health, Inc. will appear in front of the State Claims Board this afternoon against the Wisconsin Commissioner of Insurance Ted Nickel. The claim for \$176,250 plus expenses arises from the termination of the Consumer Assistance Grant contract between the Commissioner of Insurance and ABC for Health Inc.

Bobby Peterson, Public Interest Lawyer at ABC for Health said, “In January 2011, Commissioner Nickel thoughtlessly terminated a promising program to help consumers navigate the maze of public and private health insurance. Instead of supporting people in Wisconsin, Nickel returned federal funds to be spent to help people in other states. Without even calling a meeting to discuss the project, OCI recklessly pivoted 180 degrees from an agreed upon contract and shunned opportunities to support consumer assistance. OCI instead pandered to a small segment of the insurance industry.” The State Claims Board will listen to arguments by both parties this afternoon. “We will show that Commissioner Ted Nickel and his Deputy Dan Schwartz’s decision to terminate the Wisconsin consumer assistance program was unlawful and inequitable,” said Peterson. Also mentioned in the claim are Department of Health Services Secretary Dennis Smith, Deputy Secretary Kitty Rhoades, and Gov. Walker’s then Deputy and now Chief of Staff Eric Schutt.

“Through open records request, ABC for Health found documents that show the baseless decision of Nickel was orchestrated by leaders in the Walker administration.” Peterson warns other contractors in Wisconsin, saying, “The actions by OCI should give any business pause about entering into a contract with the state of Wisconsin. Here, OCI created a strong expectation for project funds with ABC. Ted Nickel and OCI’s unjust actions tarnish the credibility and reputation of the contracting process as well as the state of Wisconsin.”

**If You Go:**

State Claims Board Hearings  
Tuesday, October 11, 2011, 1:00pm-4:00pm  
State Capitol Building Room 415NW

To learn more about the consumer assistance program, to see the claim filed with the State Claims Board, and to see documents and records retrieved, visit: [www.safetyweb.org/projectsConsumerAssistance.html](http://www.safetyweb.org/projectsConsumerAssistance.html)

ABC for Health, Inc. 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.