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NEWS RELEASE

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SENATE VOTES TO DISSOLVE COVER OREGON; MOVE HEALTHCARE MARKETPLACE TO DCBS

(SALEM) – The Oregon Senate voted Thursday to dissolve Cover Oregon as a public corporation and transfer management of the state’s health insurance marketplace to the Department of Business and Consumer Services.

Senate Bill 1 is the work of the joint House and Senate Committee on Health Insurance Transition. It passed the Senate on a bi-partisan 20-10 vote. It now moves to the floor of the House of Representatives for a final vote. The measure was co-carried on the floor by Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham) and Senator Brian Boquist (R-Dallas).

“This legislation will provide Oregonians with access to affordable, quality healthcare. It will ensure legislative oversight. It will provide accountability to Oregon and her people,” said Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem/Gervais/Woodburn).

As a public corporation, Cover Oregon operated under the state’s authority but was exempt from state contracting and accountability laws. It was not subject to strict legislative oversight. As a part of the Department of Business and Consumer Services, the marketplace will be subject to state contracting laws; financial management statutes; personnel laws; and oversight by the Legislature.

“I am pleased that we have found a new home for providing health care to Oregonians that has bipartisan and stakeholder support,” said Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), Senate co-chair of the Joint Committee on Health Insurance Transition. “Now we can move on to the

more important business of making sure Oregon businesses can offer quality, affordable health care plans and that more families get the coverage they need.”

“Senate Bill 1 is the best choice left to protect \$116 million in yearly low income tax credits, keep per month fees down, provide oversight, and ensure access to the most affordable competitive private health insurance that both the Democratic and Republican party platforms advocate,” said Boquist, Senate vice co-chair of the joint committee.

Courtney first called for shutting down Cover Oregon and moving the necessary functions to a state agency in August. He and House Speaker Tina Kotek created the joint committee in December, allowing work to begin on the legislation two months before the 2015 legislative session began.

“It is well past time to abolish Cover Oregon as we know it and I am glad to see the Legislature make Senate Bill 1 a priority so early in session,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Medford). “While I am proud of the number of Oregonians who now have health care, it is abundantly clear that the Cover Oregon name has become a stain on our state’s otherwise remarkable reputation at innovation in health care. I am happy to see us move on and get back to the work of expanding access to affordable health care for all Oregonians.”