Department of Managed Health Care Press Release

Brent A. Barnhart Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DMHC Appoints Consumer Advocate to Financial Solvency Standards Board

(Sacramento) – Brent Barnhart, Director of the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC), today appointed Elizabeth Abbott to the Financial Solvency Standards Board (FSSB). Ms. Abbott currently serves as the Director of Administrative Advocacy at Health Access, a California-based consumer health care coalition.

"Beth Abbott is a nationally-respected consumer advocate who works tirelessly to improve access to high quality, affordable health care," said Director Barnhart. "Her addition to the Financial Solvency Standards Board will help strengthen the department's ability to respond to the changes coming to California's health care marketplace as a result of the Affordable Care Act."

"It is a great privilege to accept this appointment and the opportunity to continue to advocate for consumers," said Elizabeth Abbott. "I strongly believe that protecting the solvency of the organizations that pay for and deliver care is the ultimate consumer protection."

The FSSB advises the DMHC director on matters of financial solvency that affect the delivery of health care services and recommends financial solvency standards relating to health plans, medical groups and affiliates. Board members are appointed by the Director and serve three year terms. Members include individuals with expertise in areas such as health care management and delivery, accountancy and actuarial studies. Abbott's appointment expands the consumer presence on the board and enhances the DMHC's ability to serve California's health care consumers.

In addition to her work with Health Access, Abbott serves as one of the 28 national Consumer Representatives to advise the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) on the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, insurance market reforms, and other consumer issues. She previously served for 10 years as the Regional Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for Region IX. Abbott has a B.A. in psychology from the University of Redlands and has undertaken graduate work in public administration at the University of Southern California.

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About the DMHC

The DMHC regulates managed care health plans in California, protects the rights of approximately 20 million health plan enrollees, educates consumers on their health care rights and responsibilities, and preserves the financial stability of the managed health care system. Since 2000, the department has helped more than 1 million Californians resolve health plan problems through its Help Center. Information and assistance is available 24/7 at www.HealthHelp.ca.gov or by calling 1-888-466-2219.

