



June 11, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislators recognized for walking the talk of good health

(Olympia, Wash.) – Seven state legislators, four of them representing eastern Washington, helped earn more than \$10,000 for local schools for their participation in the *Legislators on the Move* walking challenge. The big winners, however, are seven schools in Washington that will share \$10,500 in grants from Asuris’s parent company, Regence BlueShield. The 2007 legislative challenge began on February 12 and ended March 23.

The three legislators who walked the farthest earned \$3,500, \$2,500 or \$1,500, depending on their finishing place, for a school in their respective legislative district. Two \$1,000 awards were also presented to this year’s ‘Most Improved Walkers’. Two honorable mention awards of \$500 were also awarded. Asuris will donate the funds distributed in eastern Washington, which can be used for any health-related project.

The 2007 Gold Medal winner is Rep. Dave Quall from the 40th Legislative District. Dave is a House veteran serving his seventh term in the assembly and has probably walked thousands of miles here in Olympia representing his constituents. This year, Dave’s mileage really counted – logging 675,996 steps or 338 miles.

The Silver Medal was presented to Sen. John Lovick from the 44th Legislative District. John recorded 652,130 steps or nearly 327 miles – enough to walk from Olympia to Pullman. The Bronze Medal was awarded to Sen. Chris Marr, representing the 6th Legislative District. Senator Marr walked a total of 611,755 steps or nearly 306 miles – the equivalent of walking from Olympia to Walla Walla.

Sen. Rodney Tom, 48th Legislative District and Sen. Linda Evans Parlette, 12th Legislative District were recognized as ‘Most Improved Walkers’ for increasing their step count significantly during the second half of the challenge.

Eastern Washington legislators Sen. Lisa Brown, 3rd Legislative District and Rep. John Ahern, 6th Legislative District received Honorable Mention awards. Participating legislators logged a total of 4,401,152 steps or 2,200 miles - roughly equal to walking from Olympia to Santa Monica and back.

The *Move It* program is supported by the Washington Department of Health and *Washington Wellness Works*, the statewide wellness program created to improve the health of state employees, retirees, and their families. The *Move It* program is designed to encourage an active, healthy lifestyle by all Washingtonians.

Asuris President Mary O. McWilliams commended legislators who participated in the program. “We sometimes forget that transforming health care begins with taking small steps such as participating in a walking program. We are proud to support this effort by the Washington Legislature,” she said.

This spring also marks the start of our *Move It* program in schools, a walking program that is running in six school districts throughout Washington, as well as districts in Idaho, Oregon and Utah. In Washington, the program will reach more than 3,800 fifth-graders in 22 schools.

This year’s participating districts in Eastern Washington are Mead and Wenatchee school districts. Asuris’s parent company, Regence BlueShield, will run the program in the Aberdeen School District, Bellingham School District, Sedro-Woolley School District and the Tahoma School District.

About Asuris Northwest Health

Based in Spokane, Asuris Northwest Health offers a full range of health care coverage options, including dental and vision coverage, for Eastern Washington employers and individuals. Asuris also offers Medicare supplemental plans and Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, and provides member access to more than 19,000 health care providers. For more information, visit the company’s Web site at www.asuris.com. Asuris Northwest Health, a not-

for-profit health plan, is a subsidiary of Regence BlueShield, a leading health plan in Washington.

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