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## **Asuris CEO to Chair National Effort Promoting Broader Health Care Stewardship**

**Portland, Oregon October 10, 2007** — Mark Ganz, President and Chief Executive Officer of Asuris Northwest Health, has been tapped to chair a prominent group of thought leaders and health policy experts convened by The Aspen Institute. The organization is launching a major initiative to reframe and broaden the national dialogue on health care reform leading up to the 2008 presidential election and beyond.

The Aspen Health Stewardship Project will expand the health care debate to the root causes of the nation's broken system, not just the symptoms. The initiative will go beyond the question of how to expand coverage and will redirect efforts toward addressing the deep structural problems that plague the health care system. As part of this effort, a series of non-partisan tools will be created to help the public evaluate health care reform proposals as they are presented.

"The diagnosis and the plan for what ails us, I believe, will be found at the intersection of science, economics and culture," said Ganz. "Only by shifting the culture underlying our health care system can we make real progress toward a system that is affordable and sustainable, and delivers quality- and customer-oriented health care to every American."

Ganz introduced the project at the inaugural Aspen Health Forum in Aspen, Colorado, a gathering of more than 400 people, including Nobel Prize laureates, prominent officials from the National Institutes of Health, and other thought leaders in medical science, health care and health policy.

The Aspen Institute, founded in 1950, is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering enlightened leadership and open-minded dialogue. Through seminars, policy programs, conferences and leadership development initiatives, the Institute and its international partners seek to promote nonpartisan inquiry.

In addition to Ganz, members of the Aspen Health Stewardship Project include Joseph Hogan, president and chief executive officer of GE Healthcare; Michael E. Porter, the

Bishop William Lawrence University Professor at Harvard Business School; Elizabeth Teisberg, Associate Professor at the University of Virginia Darden School of Business; Dr. Robert Honigberg, chief medical officer of GE Healthcare; John Parr, co-founder of Civic Results; Franklin Raines, vice chairman of the Board of Revolution Health Group; and Craig Fuller, executive vice president of APCO Worldwide.

The roster of participants will be completed next month and is expected to consist of about 20 business and health policy leaders. The group will outline the essential framework and elements of an effective health care reform proposal, which is expected to be complete in early 2008. Upon completion of the project, the Aspen Institute will invite representatives from the presidential campaigns to take part in briefings aimed at sharing the group's conclusions.

“It's important to note that the horizon for this initiative extends beyond the presidential election,” said Ganz. “We have before us a precious opportunity for real change, and any reforms must shift our culture from a control paradigm to one that is value-driven.”

#### **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 20,000 health care providers. For more information, visit the company's Web site at [www.asuris.com](http://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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