

Governor Jim Gibbons



For Immediate Release: February 25, 2008

GOVERNOR GIBBONS' STATEMENT REGARDING DOJ APPROVAL OF UNITEDHEALTH GROUP AND SIERRA HEALTH SERVICES MERGER

Carson City— Governor Jim Gibbons released the following statement regarding the proposed merger between UnitedHealth Group and Sierra Health Services:

“Since the first hearing was scheduled on this merger in July of 2007, I have called for careful scrutiny of this proposed merger and its affects on Nevadans, particularly seniors and Medicare recipients. That was and is my paramount concern. This scrutiny included insisting on scheduling hearings throughout the state so that all interested parties could voice any concerns regarding the impact of the merger on healthcare quality and access in Nevada.

“Today, I expect that the Department of Justice carefully considered the information we solicited and provided concerning the impact that the proposed merger will have on Nevada’s healthcare consumers. The divestiture aspects of this merger relating to the Medicare Advantage market is an important first step towards protecting Nevadans, particularly Nevada senior citizens who use the Medicare Advantage plan.

“The charitable contribution portion of this settlement is another important aspect, and the funds will allow the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services to allocate these additional monies toward programs and services affected by reductions in state revenues.

“Nonetheless, both the federal and state governments must remain vigilant in their efforts to ensure that the terms of any settlements or orders are strictly complied with so that a free and open healthcare market will exist and foster competition, resulting in lower healthcare costs to Nevadans.

“In that regard, I plan to meet with my Insurance Commissioner to go over the final details of this approval, once the entire findings are presented to us. Further, it is then my intention to ensure that the Insurance Commissioner works with the federal and state authorities to monitor the agreed upon terms to hold UnitedHealth Group to the highest compliance standards. Nevadans have the right to expect no less.”

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Melissa Subbotin, Press Secretary

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