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***Office of the Healthcare Advocate Saves Consumers \$565,605
in the Second Quarter of 2010, \$1.95million in 2010***

Kevin Lembo, State Healthcare Advocate, announced today that the Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA), the independent state agency that assists consumers with healthcare insurance issues, generated \$565,605 in savings for Connecticut healthcare consumers in the second quarter of 2010 and a total of \$1.95 million in 2010. The savings figures represent the costs of healthcare services, procedures and claims that would have been borne directly by consumers of healthcare, had OHA not intervened.

OHA intervenes with insurers to get what consumers have paid for -- coverage. In the first two quarters of this year, OHA opened 1028 new cases and finished work on 2119 cases. (Intensive cases often straddle two quarters or two calendar years.)

In addition to the savings-generating cases, OHA continues to receive many inquires from consumers with questions about how to get or keep their insurance, hang onto their COBRA, and understand changes in insurance laws, including state and federal healthcare reforms. "As the state's only independent state health insurance consumer assistance agency, we are dedicated to the consumers of Connecticut. The real-time services we offer can be the difference between a consumer receiving necessary and appropriate care and going without care, which can lead to serious consequences," Lembo said, "The insurance company does not and should not have the final word in what care is received."

OHA's dedicated case-work staff includes two registered nurses, an insurance examiner and an attorney. They have the expertise to handle a wide variety of cases and to advocate systemically for Connecticut consumers.

OHA continues to intervene in cases where more systemic advocacy is needed, including its pursuit of an aggressive legislative agenda to curb excessive rate increases and to ensure meaningful access to healthcare to all residents.

For free assistance, consumers can call 1-866-466-4446, or e-mail OHA at healthcare.advocate@ct.gov. For general information, Lembo recommends that consumers visit OHA's website at www.ct.gov/oha.