

PRESS RELEASE

21 South Fruit St, Suite 14, Concord, NH 03301 – 603-271-2261 – www.nh.gov/insurance

For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Kathleen Belanger
kathleen.belanger@ins.nh.gov
603-271-2261
603-271-1406 - FAX

COLLEGE STUDENTS SHOULD HIT THE BOOKS ON INSURANCE

New Hampshire's Insurance Commissioner Offers Tips

CONCORD, AUGUST 27, 2009 – As thousands of New Hampshire students head off to college this fall, New Hampshire's Insurance Commissioner, Roger Sevigny, urges these young adults – and their parents – to get smart about insurance. Children living away from home might not be covered by their parents' property, auto and health insurance, according to the Commissioner.

“College costs are high enough,” said Sevigny. “Parents don't need the unpleasant financial surprise of learning their claim is denied because their child isn't properly covered. We recommend that parents carefully review their homeowners, auto and health insurance policies to determine exactly what is – and is not – covered for their college-bound children.”

Following are some considerations and tips for parents and college students:

Health Insurance

Many colleges require health insurance as a condition of enrollment. Accidents, illnesses, unexpected emergencies and routine conditions may require expensive treatment. Although full-time college students are often covered under their parents' health insurance plans until they graduate or reach 26 years of age, not all plans provide coverage under all circumstances. It is important to check whether the campus health facility, local physicians and hospitals accept the family's insurance coverage. If your plan is a health maintenance organization, or “HMO”, with coverage restricted to local doctors and hospitals, you may need a separate individual plan for your college student going out of state. It might be advisable to purchase a student insurance plan through the college. If you buy an individual plan from a private insurer, consider the amount of deductible or co-pay, the extent of the coverage, the types of services covered, exclusions and limitations, flexibility in selecting health care providers and benefit maximums. Be sure the student has a copy of the relevant insurance cards and knows about obtaining referrals and approvals before seeking treatment.

Renter's Insurance

Whether students live in college housing or rent apartments, they will likely have valuables — such as a computer, TV, stereo and/or video game system — that could be stolen or destroyed in a fire or natural disaster. Parents should check their homeowners policy to see whether it will cover a college student's possessions. Furthermore, if students live in an off-campus apartment, parents should consider purchasing a renter's insurance policy. Your insurance agent can help you determine the amount and type of coverage you need, and frequently the school will have plans available.

Auto Insurance

Parents and college students should do some auto insurance homework before heading off to school. Your insurance agent can tell you how your coverage and premiums will be affected. Remember, most states have mandatory auto insurance requirements. If a college student is going to be using the family vehicle when visiting home, parents should make sure the child is listed by name on the family's auto insurance policy. If the student will be taking a car with them to school, parents should check the specific rates for the college's city and state before deciding whether to keep their child on the family's auto policy. In addition, the insurance company should be notified each semester if the student maintains good grades, as good student discounts can significantly lower premiums.

Parents should consider raising the policy's deductible and only allowing their child to drive the family's oldest, least expensive car. In addition, parents might consider purchasing an older car for their child and foregoing comprehensive and collision insurance on that vehicle. If your child won't be using the family car regularly because they are away at college, ask your insurance agent if you're eligible for a premium discount.

For additional information and helpful tips and considerations about all types of insurance, visit the NH Insurance Department's web site at www.nh.gov/insurance. In addition, you can educate yourself about insurance at the National Association of Insurance Commissioner's "Insure U" public education Web site by linking through the NH Insurance Department's home page or directly at www.InsureUonline.org. The site is also available in Spanish at www.insureUonline.org/espanol.

* * * *

ABOUT THE NH INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

The first insurance regulator in the US, the NH Insurance Department was created in 1851 and charged with enforcing and administering New Hampshire's insurance laws. The department, an agency of the executive branch of New Hampshire state government, conducts safety and soundness and market conduct examinations of licensees, licenses insurance companies and insurance producers, reviews premium rates and policy forms,

provides assistance, information and referral services to New Hampshire insurance consumers, and administers the filing and collection of New Hampshire's insurance premium tax. For more information, visit the Insurance Department's web site at: www.nh.gov/insurance.

ABOUT THE NAIC

Headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) is a voluntary organization of the chief insurance regulatory officials of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the five U.S. territories. The NAIC's overriding objective is to assist state insurance regulators in protecting consumers and helping maintain the financial stability of the insurance industry by offering financial, actuarial, legal, computer, research, market conduct and economic expertise. Formed in 1871, the NAIC is the oldest association of state officials. For more than 135 years, state-based insurance supervision has served the needs of consumers, industry and the business of insurance at-large by ensuring hands-on, frontline protection for consumers, while providing insurers the uniform platforms and coordinated systems they need to compete effectively in an ever-changing marketplace. For more information, visit NAIC on the Web at: http://www.naic.org/press_home.htm

###