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NAIFA Expands Health Advocacy and Refines Health Reform Policy

FALLS CHURCH, VA (May 5, 2009) — The National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA) Board of Trustees announces its unanimous decision to expand health and employee benefit advocacy to all NAIFA members and to refine its health policy.

“Since 1990, NAIFA has relied on our conference members at AHIA-NAIFA Health and Employee Benefits to represent all of NAIFA in the discussions of health care reform across the nation,” states NAIFA President Cliff F. Wilson, CLU, ChFC, LUTCF, CLF. “The national debate on health care reform affects all members of NAIFA, and health and employee benefits advocacy should be afforded to all NAIFA members.”

The full benefits of AHIA membership have been afforded to a relatively small group of NAIFA members who primarily specialize in health and employee benefits. However, the majority of NAIFA members are actively involved in the sale of one or more forms of health insurance products, including medical, disability income, long term care, critical illness insurance, Medicare coverages, worksite products, and other employee benefits. With the expansion, NAIFA is positioned to strongly represent its members’ interests and bring the voices of more than 50,000 active members to bear on legislative and regulatory issues affecting the health care and employee benefits industry.

“Health and employee benefits agents face uncertain and difficult times in the current environment, especially without significant numbers lobbying against issues such as a public health plan option, single payer proposals, and others,” offers AHIA President Robelynn H. Abadie. “NAIFA is the only organization that is devoted solely to ensuring the success and protecting the interests of agents and advisors.”

Refining its health policy will better position NAIFA to preserve the employer-based delivery system that provides security for over 160 million Americans and expand affordable coverage without resorting to new public programs. NAIFA’s health reform tenets now support guarantee-issue coverage with no pre-existing condition exclusions, if balanced with an enforceable individual requirement to retain health insurance.

Listen to the **NAIFA Expands Health Advocacy and Refines Health Reform Policy** podcast at www.naifa.org/news/events/podcasts/ahia.cfm

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“Expanding our health and employee benefits advocacy to all NAIFA members will further enhance the value of NAIFA membership,” continues Wilson. “As we continue to define our policy, we will have a stronger voice in the debates shaping health reform.”

NAIFA is excited about the alignment of policies and are looking forward to working with America’s Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) in a collaborative effort to positively influence the health care reform debate that is already under way. “Today’s announcement by NAIFA is an important contribution to the health care reform discussion,” said Karen Ignagni, President and CEO of AHIP. “Policymakers and stakeholders from across the health care system need to work together to achieve health care reform that covers everyone, improves quality, and gets health care costs under control.”

About NAIFA: NAIFA comprises more than 700 state and local associations representing the interests of approximately 200,000 agents and their associates nationwide. NAIFA members focus their practices on one or more of the following: life insurance and annuities, health insurance and employee benefits, multiline, and financial advising and investments. The Association’s mission is to advocate for a positive legislative and regulatory environment, enhance business and professional skills, and promote the ethical conduct of its members.