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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Catamount Health Insurance Program Available

Waterbury, VT – Secretary of AHS Robert Hofmann made clear today that Catamount Health, one of a group of health insurance options offered through the umbrella program Green Mountain Care, continues to operate. Normally *continued operations* does not warrant a press release, but State officials became aware recently of some public concern that the program might be frozen or financially undercut in its mission to access to affordable care for uninsured Vermonters. Said Hofmann, “Catamount Health is fully operational and accepting new applications”. In addition, the Governor is proposing changes to Catamount Health that will increase accessibility to health care and further reduce the number of Vermonters who otherwise would be forced to delay needed medical treatment. When care is delayed, treatment often becomes more expensive; driving higher shared costs for everyone.

Vermont is making steady strides in covering its uninsured. In little over a year, more than 11,500 Vermonters have enrolled in health care programs offered through Green Mountain Care, the state’s family of comprehensive health coverage programs for the uninsured. Vermont’s uninsured rate has fallen from 9.8% of those living without health insurance to 7.6%. This is indeed positive, but in the current financial climate, with more than 47,000 Vermonters still lacking health insurance, there is more work to do.

Work will continue on Catamount Health, but notably, roughly 50 percent of uninsured Vermonters are eligible for Green Mountain Care programs that have been in place for years like Dr. Dynasaur and the Vermont Health Access Plan (VHAP). Enrolling uninsured Vermonters into these programs will be a significant step toward the goal of insuring 96 percent of our residents by 2010.

Green Mountain Care is actively working with the Vermont Department of Labor to reach out to employees who have lost employment, as well as working with community organizations to help inform uninsured Vermonters that they may be eligible. If you know an individual or family who is uninsured, encourage them to check out their options by calling **1-800-250-8427** or by visiting www.GreenMountainCare.org.

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