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NEWS RELEASE

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Be on the Alert for Deceptive Annuity Sales Practices

BOISE ID – A recent edition of NBC's *Dateline* has raised concerns about the possibility of deceptive insurance and annuity sales practices targeting Idaho's senior population. The Idaho Department of Insurance warns Idaho residents to be cautious and take the time to read and understand the complete application for any insurance contract before signing.

Department of Insurance Director, Bill Deal, said, "The majority of Idaho insurance professionals are honest and want to do what is best for their clients. But if you are unsure or have questions about an insurance contract you are being encouraged to purchase, please call us. We can help you."

If you are approached by a salesperson with any type of insurance contract, get a paper copy and ask someone to review it for you before you sign. Gina McBride, Consumer Affairs Supervisor, reminds consumers about the 20-day free-look period for life and annuity products. "Get professional advice from someone you know and trust," she said. "You have 20 days after the policy is delivered to cancel or make any changes. After that time, you likely will not be able to get out of the contract without paying a penalty."

McBride reminds Idahoans, "Only do business with people you trust. If you don't trust them enough to give out personal information – don't trust them with your money."

According to Jim Genetti, Consumer Services Bureau Chief, "Too many seniors find out after the fact that the annuity did not fit their circumstances." Learn about surrender charges and always have a friend or family member with you at sales presentations. Idaho law requires that annuity salespersons ask questions to determine if a product is suitable for the consumer; do not waive the suitability questionnaire.

If seniors are eligible for any kind of subsidies, they should consider the implications before purchasing any kind of annuity product. Senior Health Insurance Benefits

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Advisors Coordinator, Genii Hamilton advised, “Monthly income from annuities is considered an asset and could eliminate your eligibility in a particular program.”

If you suspect you have been a victim of deceptive sales practices or if just have questions, please call the Department of Insurance at 334-4250 or 1-800-721-3272.

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