

Department of Insurance Recovers \$2.1 Million for Insurance Policyholders in 2014, Helps Save Businesses \$9.2 Million



Commissioner Stewart Also Reports \$94.6 Million Collected in Premium Taxes in Fiscal 2014

□ **Dover, DE** – The Delaware Department of Insurance recovered more than \$2.1 million for policyholders in calendar year 2014, and helped business owners save nearly \$9.3 million in workers' compensation insurance costs. DOI also collected over \$94.6 million dollars through fees, fines and insurance premium taxes during fiscal year 2014, distributing most of those dollars to fire companies and ambulance services, the police pension fund, and the state's general fund.

These numbers are highlights of the presentation made to the General Assembly's Joint Finance Committee last month by Insurance Commissioner Karen Weldin Stewart and her staff. "I would especially like to thank the staff members here at the DOI who assist consumers with their insurance-related inquiries all year long. Their expertise helps resolve numerous questions and concerns from policyholders, often helping to correct smaller problems before they become bigger complications. The Department's staff and employees work throughout the year to fulfill our mission of protecting Delawareans by educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities."

DOI's annual appearance at Legislative Hall differs from most

state agencies' presentations to the JFC. Instead of relying on the state legislature for financial support, the Insurance Department covers its own operating costs with a portion of revenue obtained through insurance premium taxes and other fees and fines. Pursuant to state law, DOI then makes contributions through the State Treasurer's office to various state and local accounts. During fiscal 2014, the Department provided \$35.1 million of the tax revenue to Delaware's volunteer fire companies, the City of Wilmington fireman's pension fund, ambulance service providers throughout the State, and the police pension fund. More than \$3.6 million was transferred to the workers' compensation assistance fund, and \$1 million went to the reserve fund for victims of insurance fraud. The remaining \$54.9 million was deposited into the general fund, for use as the State deems appropriate.

In addition to premium taxes, the Department generates revenue by advocating for consumers during disputes with insurance companies. DOI's Consumer Services Division recovered \$1,259,634.92 for individual Delaware consumers last year while handling 5,610 formal complaints and inquiries. Moreover, the Department facilitated arbitration hearings requested by, or on behalf of, consumers which led to awards totaling \$843,035.00.

The Department of Insurance also succeeded in saving money for Delaware businesses through its Workplace Safety Program, which allows employers to earn discounts of up to 19 percent on their workers' compensation insurance premiums by meeting certain safety requirements and undergoing voluntary inspections. The 1,496 businesses enrolled in the program in 2014 saved \$9,296,878.00, according to Delaware Compensation Ratings Bureau estimates. The DOI continues to work with employers and insurers to promote the benefits of the program.

The Department of Insurance is also home to the Delaware Medicare Assistance Bureau (DMAB), formerly known as ELDERinfo. DMAB staff assists Medicare recipients with

questions related to Medicare, Medigap (Medicare supplement) insurance, Medicare Part D (prescription medication plans), Medicare Advantage plans, and other financial assistance programs. In 2014, DMAB serviced over 6,535 beneficiaries through telephone calls, face-to-face meetings, and e-mail. DMAB's partnership with the Division of Medicaid & Medical Assistance helped saved beneficiaries \$609,000.00 in 2014.

If you need help with insurance matters, call the Department at (302) 674-7300, or (800) 282-8611 for Consumer Services. For more information on the *Workplace Safety Program*, call 302-674-7377. Visit our website www.delawareinsurance.gov for more resources and links.

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Delaware Department of Insurance: "Protecting Delawareans through regulation and education while providing oversight of the insurance industry to best serve the public."

For Immediate Release

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