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January 13, 2005

## **UNDERHEIM WON'T SEEK RE-ELECTION**

### **Health Committee Chair Grateful to Oshkosh for Years of Support**

**Oshkosh...**Long time chair of the Assembly Health Committee Gregg Underheim (R-Oshkosh) has announced that this will be his last term in the state legislature.

"I've enjoyed every minute of my service to the people of Oshkosh. Whether it was working with the folks here at home or on health care issues in Madison, making government work for those it is intended to serve has been a top priority for me. I'm grateful for all the support I've received from friends and neighbors over the years, and now I look forward to seeking new challenges."

Underheim said he is in good health and planned to seek employment after his current term ends.

Underheim has been Chair of the Assembly Health Committee since 1995. He said the state has made significant improvements to the health care system over the years for consumers, and that patients will have be able to make more informed decisions than ever before about their health care.

Among Underheim's accomplishments was a bill to allow consumers who were denied coverage by their HMOs to appeal that decision to an independent panel with the power force HMOs and insurance companies to pay for care.

In 1996, Underheim led a Legislative Council study committee that looked into the issue of data collection in the health care system. The result was successful legislation that was supported by business and labor, as well as members of both sides of the political aisle. It also set the stage for a current bill, also authored by Underheim, which will allow consumers to access that information to learn more about their health care providers, physicians, and costs associated with their health care.

"Allowing the public to know more about where their health care dollars go is vital to our efforts to control costs while ensuring quality care," Underheim said. "It has taken a long time to accomplish that goal, but I believe we'll finally get there."

Underheim said he will also be pushing a bill before his term ends to require accepted standards for nurse midwives, which will provide greater safety for mothers who chose to have their babies at home.

Elected to the Assembly since 1987, Underheim said he thought it best to make his announcement as soon as he made is decision so that others interested in serving would have plenty of time to consider it before filing deadlines.

"Serving citizens of the Oshkosh area has been a tremendously rewarding experience, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve. It just feels like the right time to move on."

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