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### **LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT RESULTS IN HALT TO BLUES MERGER**

(January 22, 2009) – Today, Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society president Gerald Williams, Jr., MD, praised the state government, saying, “Government worked the way it is supposed to work; to protect the interests of its people.”

Dr. Williams’ comments came in reaction to the announced cancellation of the merger between Highmark Inc. and Independence Blue Cross. For the nearly two years since the proposed merger was announced by the state’s two largest healthcare insurers, the General Assembly and the Administration have held hearings, received comments, and proposed oversight legislation to limit the adverse impact the proposed merger would have on Pennsylvania’s healthcare insurance market. Objections raised by legislators and regulators as a result of information they received from constituents through the various hearing processes led the insurers to cancel their merger plans.

“The state government heard the voices of patients, physicians, and hospitals through their oversight process. And more importantly, the state government acted upon their constituents concerns by proposing reasonable limitations on the proposed merger,” said Williams. “We thank the Senate, the House and the Administration for their

diligence in investigating the proposed merger and for understanding that competition among healthcare insurers is the best method to improve patient access to high quality care and to ensure affordable insurance products.”

Dr. Williams further stated that many legislators, legislative staffers and administration officials played vital roles during the past two years. He also singled out specific individuals for their extraordinary efforts in ensuring the Commonwealth’s healthcare insurance market would not become a de facto monopoly for one mega-insurer.

“The Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society specifically thanks Senator Don White for doggedly pursuing his committee's thorough investigation of the merger; Representative Todd Eachus for being the driving force behind last session's oversight legislation; and Insurance Commissioner Joel Ario for seriously considering our concerns and the concerns of our patients,” Williams stated. “Without their efforts, this merger may have simply slipped through.”

POS is a professional medical specialty organization representing more than 900 orthopaedic surgeons across Pennsylvania. For more information, visit the POS website at [www.paorthosociety.org](http://www.paorthosociety.org).

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