

Oregon medical malpractice insurance rates continue decline

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Lower Rates Help the State Retain, Attract Physicians

SALEM, Ore. — Physicians and surgeons in Oregon have seen a decline in medical professional liability insurance rates the past several years, according to a Department of Consumer and Business Services analysis of recent rate changes.

The DCBS Insurance Division found that physicians insured by Oregon's two largest medical malpractice insurers have experienced an average 18 percent rate decrease since 2005 (see chart below). The two largest insurers — Continental Casualty Company (CNA) and Northwest Physicians Insurance Company (NPIC) — represent about 53 percent of the medical professional liability insurance market in Oregon.

—“In the earlier part of this decade, rising malpractice insurance costs were a significant concern for specialty doctors, particularly in rural areas, forcing many to leave the state,” said Cory Streisinger, director of the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services. —“The recent decline in rates should help Oregon continue to retain and attract highly skilled physicians.”

CNA, which provides malpractice insurance for the Oregon Medical Association, recently filed a 2.5 percent rate decrease with the Insurance Division. The decrease is effective May 1, 2009. NPIC has not filed a rate change this year as it transitions its business to its larger affiliate, The Doctors Company, An Interinsurance Exchange. This is the third straight year each company has dropped rates or left them unchanged.

The Insurance Division reviews all rate changes by medical malpractice insurers that are authorized to do business in Oregon. However, only rate changes of more than 15 percent “ up or down “ require approval. The rates reported below are averages; a particular physician may see greater or lesser changes depending on his or her specialty, loss history, and policy limits.

	NPIC	CNA
2004	15.0%	14.6%
2005	14.6%	2.9%

2006 -8.3% 1.9%

2007 -10.2% -3.2%

2008 -8.9% -7.6%

2009 no filing -2.5%

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