

**Idaho Statesman, Friday, Sept. 9, 2011 – by Audrey Dutton**

## **Idaho reclaims its insurance oversight from feds**

After getting a waiver from Gov. Butch Otter to comply with the 2010 health care reform law, the Idaho Department of Insurance has averted a federal takeover of insurance rate reviews. The department sent out a bulletin to health insurers last week that details exactly what insurance companies have to disclose as part of the reviews.

The department already was reviewing some health plan rates filed by insurance companies, as a matter of course.

But the health reform law set some new standards, including transparency and justifications for all double-digit rate increases. Otter's executive order this year — banning government entities from cooperating with the law that Otter says is unconstitutional — made it impossible for the department to meet the new standards.

As a result, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said in July that it would conduct Idaho's reviews starting Sept. 1. Otter's waiver gave the department enough authority to keep that from happening, so Idaho got the go-ahead Aug. 24 to oversee its own rates.