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Oregon medical malpractice rates continue to decrease

(Salem) — For the fourth year in a row, most physicians and surgeons in Oregon will see a decline or no change in medical professional liability insurance rates.

The Doctors Company decreased average rates by 5.1 percent, effective April 1, 2010. Continental Casualty Company (CNA), which provides malpractice insurance for the Oregon Medical Association, recently indicated it would have no change in rates this year.

The two insurers represent 57 percent of the medical professional liability insurance market in Oregon. Their malpractice rates declined an average of 20 percent over the past five years, according to a Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) analysis.

“Declining medical malpractice rates help us retain and attract doctors, and that’s good for Oregon,” said Cory Streisinger, director of the Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services.

The DCBS 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.

Rate changes for Oregon’s two largest insurers

Year	NPIC/Doctors Company*	CNA
2006	-8.3%	1.9%
2007	-10.2%	-3.2%
2008	-8.9%	-7.6%
2009	0%	-2.5%
2010	-5.1%	0%

*Prior to 2010, coverage was through Northwest Physicians Insurance Company. Beginning in 2009, coverage was through The Doctors Company, Northwest Physicians Insurance Company’s parent.

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