



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**DMHC Director Issues Statement on California Supreme Court Ruling Forbidding  
Balance Billing of Health Care Consumers**

**(Sacramento)** – California Department of Managed Health Care Director (DMHC) Cindy Ehnes issued the following statement today on the unanimous California Supreme Court ruling in Prospect Medical Group vs. Northridge Medical Center in which the court prohibits balance billing patients by emergency room doctors.

“With today’s ruling, we’ve started out the New Year right by removing a crushing economic burden off the backs of California health care consumers.

“This decision confirms the DMHC's regulatory action taken last year to protect consumers from balance billing. We’ve never retreated from protecting patients caught in the middle of billing disputes and, just as vigorously, we won’t retreat from efforts to make sure that doctors are paid fairly.”

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**Department of Managed Health Care**

January 13, 2009

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The California Department of Managed Health Care is the only stand-alone HMO watchdog agency in the nation, touching the lives of more than 21 million enrollees. The DMHC has assisted more than 800,000 Californians resolve their HMO problems through its 24-hour Help Center, educates consumers on health care rights and responsibilities, and works closely with HMO plans to ensure a solvent and stable managed health care system.

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