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***Statement by Council President Jim Schowalter
on the budget proposal by Gov. Walz***

Significant health insurance proposals in the budget announced today by Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz recognize the fact that there is a lot of work to do to help make sure Minnesotans get the care they need now and in the future.

The Council now begins the work of digging into each of the Governor's ideas, along with proposals from others, to understand how decisions facing policymakers in St. Paul will shape the care Minnesotans get.

"No matter how you get help paying for care—through insurance at work or a policy you buy on your own; Medicare, Medicaid or MinnesotaCare—may be affected by proposals making their way through the legislature," said Jim Schowalter, president of the Minnesota Council of Health Plans. "We'll work with leaders in state agencies to analyze proposals to help decision-makers understand the connections, possible tradeoffs and outcomes that aren't intended."

"The proposals from Gov. Walz drive home the fact that there isn't one approach that will solve the problems facing Minnesotans," Schowalter continued. "While the Council has considered some of these proposals previously, we will now be able to dig into the detail offered by Gov. Walz."

"The rising expense of care has real consequences for all of us. Stabilizing options and making care less expensive for all Minnesotans is the biggest challenge we all face," Schowalter concluded. "The best health care in the world doesn't do us any good if we can't afford it."