



## **AlwaysCare Benefits is the First to Offer Insured Hearing Benefits with Dental and Vision Coverage**

### ***Insured Hearing Rider Includes Free Screenings for Children***

**Baton Rouge, LA, August 13, 2007** —AlwaysCare Benefits is pleased to announce its partnership with EPIC Hearing Healthcare to offer an insured AlwaysCare Hearing Benefit as a rider with its existing AlwaysCare Dental and Vision plans. The hearing benefit is the first of its kind and is available now in limited markets with a national rollout planned.

According to the National Institutes of Health, hearing loss is the third most common chronic disability in the United States, affecting over 31 million Americans. Of those affected, over 20 million are working adults ages 18-64.

“This partnership reinforces our commitment to the overall wellness of our customers,” said Erich Sternberg, President, AlwaysCare Benefits. “With millions of Americans in need of hearing coverage, we believe this rider will be a strong addition to our ancillary offerings.”

“Hearing is a valued life asset that must be protected and, when needed, treated and assisted through a program for hearing healthcare,” says Mike Reha, EPIC’s Director of Sales and Marketing. “EPIC is excited to partner with AlwaysCare Benefits and provide easy access to hearing health professionals to help individuals eliminate the barriers to better hearing.”

The hearing rider offers affordable, accessible coverage for services and materials often not covered under general health insurance plans, along with access to substantial discounts on hearing aids and other hearing-related services and materials. This partnership will allow AlwaysCare Benefits customers easy access to over 3,400 high quality hearing physicians and audiologists, on-call support for customer questions and assistance, and reduced out-of-pocket costs.

A few of the services available to members include: an annual hearing screening, advanced testing for members that have been identified from the initial screening to have a hearing problem, and allowances toward hearing aids. Adult coverage is available for a low monthly cost, and when coverage is elected by an employer, the AlwaysCare Hearing Benefit will automatically be included in AlwaysCare’s Dental Plans for children at no additional premium cost. The Hearing Benefit will also be offered as a rider on AlwaysCare’s Vision Plans when a group elects only vision coverage.

For more information, please visit [www.AlwaysCareBenefits.com](http://www.AlwaysCareBenefits.com) or call 1-888-729-5433, opt. 5 to speak with a live representative.

#### **About AlwaysCare Benefits, Inc and Starmount Life Insurance Company:**

AlwaysCare Benefits is an affiliate of Starmount Life Insurance Company and both are family-run businesses. Known for reliable service and customer satisfaction, AlwaysCare Benefits is a leading provider of group dental and vision benefits marketed nationally as AlwaysDental<sup>SM</sup> and AlwaysVision<sup>SM</sup>. AlwaysCare, in partnership with National Guardian Life Insurance Company\* [AM Best A- (Excellent) rating, 2007], markets products in 49 states.

*\*National Guardian Life Insurance Company is not affiliated with The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, a.k.a. The Guardian or Guardian Life.*

**About EPIC**

As the national leader in hearing services, EPIC Hearing Healthcare provides high quality, affordable hearing care plans through a national network of independent otologists and audiologists. EPIC's Hearing Service Plan (HSP), available in all 50 states, provides the hearing care coverage lacking from most general healthcare plans and other benefit packages. EPIC and its clinicians ensure satisfaction with hearing needs at substantial savings. For more information, visit [www.epichearing.com](http://www.epichearing.com) or call toll free at (877) 606-3742.

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