

CHAPTER 628

INSURANCE MARKETING

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Cross-reference: See definitions in s. 600.03.

NOTE: Chapter 371, laws of 1975, which created this chapter of the statutes, contains notes explaining the revision.

SUBCHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

628.01 Purposes. The purposes of this chapter are:

- (1) To encourage improvement in the professional competence of insurance intermediaries;
- (2) To provide maximum freedom of marketing methods for insurance, consistent with the interests of the public in this state;
- (3) To preserve and encourage competition at the consumer level;
- (4) To limit the adverse effects of imperfect competition on the cost of insurance; and
- (5) To regulate insurance marketing practices in conformity with the general purposes of chs. 600 to 655.

History: 1975 c. 371; 1979 c. 89; 1989 a. 187 s. 29.

628.02 Definitions. In chs. 600 to 655, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) **INSURANCE MARKETING INTERMEDIARIES.** (a) *Activities constituting intermediary.* Except as provided under par. (b), a person is an "intermediary" if the person does or assists another in doing any of the following:

1. Solicits, negotiates or places insurance or annuities on behalf of an insurer or a person seeking insurance or annuities; or
2. Advises other persons about insurance needs and coverages.

(b) *Exceptions.* The following persons are not intermediaries:

1. A regular salaried officer, employee or other representative of an insurer or licensed intermediary, other than a risk retention group or risk purchasing group, who devotes substantially all working time to activities other than those in par. (a), and who receives no compensation that is directly dependent upon the amount of insurance business obtained;
2. A regular salaried officer or employee of a person seeking to procure insurance, other than for members of a risk purchasing group, who receives no compensation that is directly dependent

upon the amount of insurance coverage procured, with respect to such insurance;

3. A person who gives incidental advice in the normal course of a business or professional activity other than insurance consulting if neither the person nor the person's employer receives compensation directly or indirectly on account of any insurance transaction that results from that advice;

4. A person who without special compensation performs incidental services for another at the other's request without providing advice or technical or professional services of a kind normally provided by an intermediary;

5. A holder of a group insurance policy, or any other person involved in mass marketing, with respect to administrative activities in connection with such a policy, if he or she receives no compensation therefor beyond actual expenses, estimated on a reasonable basis;

6. A person who provides information, advice or service for the principal purpose of reducing loss or the risk of loss;

7. A person who gives advice or assistance without compensation, direct or indirect;

7m. A person who acts solely as an agent, as defined in s. 616.71 (1); or

8. A representative of a common carrier who sells only over-the-counter, short-term travel accident ticket policies and baggage insurance.

(3) **INSURANCE BROKER.** An intermediary is an insurance broker if the intermediary acts in the procuring of insurance on behalf of an applicant for insurance or an insured, and does not act on behalf of the insurer except by collecting premiums or performing other ministerial acts.

(4) **INSURANCE AGENT.** An intermediary is an insurance agent if the intermediary acts as an intermediary other than as a broker.

(4g) **MANAGING GENERAL AGENT.** An intermediary is a managing general agent if the intermediary does all of the following:

(a) Manages all or a portion of the insurance business of an insurer.

(b) Adjusts claims, negotiates reinsurance for the insurer or is affiliated or associated with a person who adjusts claims or negotiates reinsurance for the insurer.

(4m) REINSURANCE BROKER. A person is a reinsurance broker if the person solicits, negotiates or places reinsurance cessions or retrocessions on behalf of a ceding insurer.

(4p) REINSURANCE MANAGER. A person is a reinsurance manager if the person has authority to bind, or manages, all or a portion of the assumed reinsurance business of an insurer.

(5) SURPLUS LINES AGENT OR BROKER. A surplus lines agent or broker is one licensed to place insurance with unauthorized insurers, under s. 628.04 (2).

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1979 c. 89; 1981 c. 38, 314; 1987 a. 166, 247; 1989 a. 187 s. 29; 1991 a. 269; 2001 a. 38.

SUBCHAPTER II

LICENSING OF INTERMEDIARIES

628.03 Requirement of license. (1) GENERAL. No natural person may perform, offer to perform or advertise any service as an intermediary in this state, unless the natural person obtains a license under s. 628.04 or 628.09, and no person may utilize the services of another as an intermediary if the person knows or should know that the other does not have a license as required by law.

(1m) RISK PURCHASING GROUPS. No natural person may solicit, negotiate or obtain insurance on behalf of a risk purchasing group which does business in this state unless the natural person obtains a license under s. 628.04 or 628.09. A risk purchasing group may not allow a natural person to solicit, negotiate or obtain insurance on its behalf if the risk purchasing group knows that the natural person is not licensed as required by this subsection.

(2) EXEMPTIONS. The commissioner may by rule exempt certain classes of natural persons from the requirement of obtaining a license:

(a) If the functions they perform do not require special competence or trustworthiness or the regulatory surveillance made possible by licensing; or

(b) If other existing safeguards make regulation unnecessary.

(3) VALIDITY OF CONTRACT. No insurance contract is invalid as a result of a violation of this section.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1981 c. 38; 1987 a. 247.

Cross Reference: See also chs. *Ins 45* and *47* and ss. *Ins 6.50* and *6.58*, Wis. adm. code.

628.04 Issuance of license. (1) CONDITIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS. Except as provided in s. 628.095 or 628.097, the commissioner shall issue a license to act as an agent to any applicant who:

(a) Pays the applicable fee;

(b) Shows to the satisfaction of the commissioner:

1. That if a natural person, the applicant has the intent in good faith to do business as an intermediary or, if a corporation, partnership or limited liability company, has that intent and has included that purpose in the articles of incorporation, certificate of limited partnership or general partnership agreement or limited liability company operating agreement;

2. That if a natural person, the applicant is competent and trustworthy, or that if a partnership, limited liability company or corporation, all partners, members, directors or principal officers or persons in fact having comparable powers are competent and trustworthy, and that it will transact business in such a way that all acts that may only be performed by a licensed intermediary are performed exclusively by natural persons who are licensed under this section; and

3. That the applicant intends to comply with s. 628.51 with reference to compensation for effecting insurance upon the applicant's own property or other risk; and

(c) If a nonresident, executes in a form acceptable to the commissioner an agreement to be subject to the jurisdiction of the commissioner and the courts of this state on any matter related to

the applicant's insurance activities in this state, on the basis of service of process under ss. 601.72 and 601.73.

(1m) AGENT MAY ACT AS BROKER. A licensed agent may act as an agent or as a broker.

(2) SURPLUS LINES AGENTS OR BROKERS. Except as provided in s. 628.095 or 628.097, the commissioner may issue a license as an agent or broker authorized to place business under s. 618.41 if the applicant shows to the satisfaction of the commissioner that in addition to the qualifications necessary to obtain a general license under sub. (1), the applicant has the competence to deal with the problems of surplus lines insurance. The commissioner may by rule require an agent or broker authorized to place business under s. 618.41 to supply a bond not larger than \$100,000, conditioned upon proper performance of obligations as a surplus lines agent or broker.

(3) CLASSIFICATION AND EXAMINATION. The commissioner may by rule prescribe classifications of intermediaries in addition to agent and surplus lines agent or broker, by kind of authority, or kind of insurance, or in other ways, and may prescribe different standards of competence, including examinations and educational prerequisites, for each class. The commissioner may by rule set prelicensing and annual continuing education standards, but may not require a licensed intermediary to complete a course of study requiring more than 30 hours, per license, of approved continuing education, including continuing education programs approved by the commissioner and presented by the insurers, in any 2-year period. The commissioner may approve courses or programs that an applicant for an intermediary's license may attend to fulfill a prelicensing education requirement, or that a licensed intermediary may attend to fulfill a continuing education requirement, and may approve organizations that may offer approved courses or programs. The commissioner may, by rule, exempt any class of intermediaries from the continuing education requirements. So far as practicable, the commissioner shall issue a single license to each individual intermediary for a single fee.

(4) INTERMEDIARIES REPRESENTING NONPROFIT SERVICE PLANS. Intermediaries dealing with or representing nonprofit service plans must be licensed under ss. 628.03 and 628.04, and are subject to all provisions of this chapter.

(5) MANAGING GENERAL AGENTS AND REINSURANCE BROKERS AND MANAGERS. The commissioner may, by rule, require every managing general agent that is not a natural person, every reinsurance broker and every reinsurance manager to obtain a license in this state. The commissioner may, by rule, prescribe classifications for reinsurance brokers and managers, exemptions from the license requirement for managing general agents that are not natural persons, reinsurance brokers and reinsurance managers and grounds for suspension or revocation of a license. The commissioner shall consider the applicable model acts adopted by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners before promulgating rules under this section.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1977 c. 363; 1979 c. 154; 1981 c. 38; 1991 a. 269; 1993 a. 112; 1995 a. 27, 400; 1997 a. 191.

Cross Reference: See also chs. *Ins 26, 28, 42, 45,* and *47,* and s. *Ins 6.59,* Wis. adm. code.

628.05 Licensing of town mutual agents. (1) GENERAL EXEMPTION. Except as otherwise provided in sub. (2), or by rule promulgated by the commissioner, persons engaged in soliciting insurance exclusively for town mutuals are not subject to the requirements of s. 628.03 (1).

(2) AGENTS SOLICITING INSURANCE REQUIRING REINSURANCE. No person may solicit any application for a contract providing coverage of the kind specified in s. 612.31 (3) unless the person first obtains a license to do so under this chapter. The license need be only for those coverages the town mutual is authorized to write and any examination of applicants shall be appropriately limited.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421.

628.06 Licensing of fraternal agents. (1) GENERAL PROVISION. Subject to sub. (2), an agent of a fraternal is subject to the same licensing requirements as an agent for any other insurer doing the same lines of business, unless the agent was an agent for a fraternal immediately prior to October 2, 1963, and is still such an agent on June 19, 1976. The agent's authority under this exception ceases upon ceasing, for however short a period, to be an agent for a fraternal.

(2) PART-TIME FRATERNAL AGENTS. An agent for one or more fraternal who devotes or intends to devote less than half-time to the solicitation of insurance business is not subject to the requirements of sub. (1). A person is presumed to have devoted half-time to the solicitation of insurance business if in the preceding calendar year the person procured life insurance contracts in a face amount in excess of \$50,000, or, in the case of other kinds of insurance, on the persons of more than 25 individuals, and if the person received compensation therefor.

History: 1975 c. 373, 421.

Legislative Council Note, 1975: These subsections continue the general thrust of s. 208.21. The grandfather clause is considerably restricted. The part-time exception in sub. (2) reflects the informal and nonprofessional nature of some of the marketing methods of the smaller fraternal; some question may be raised about the merits of the exception, but it reflects strongly held views. It clearly permits nonprofessional solicitation of new members by existing members, when no compensation is involved. [Bill 643-S]

628.07 Licensing of nonresidents. The commissioner may waive the requirement of an examination for a nonresident applicant under s. 628.04 if the jurisdiction of the applicant's residence has imposed upon the applicant requirements substantially as rigorous as those of this state and has enforced them with comparable rigor.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421.

628.08 Changes in status of intermediaries. Every change in the members of a partnership or a limited liability company or the principal officers of a corporation licensed as an intermediary, every significant change in management powers in the entity, and so far as it relates to competency or trustworthiness as an intermediary, every change in the status and relationships of a natural person licensed as an intermediary, shall be reported to the commissioner promptly by the intermediary, in such detail and form as the commissioner by rule prescribes.

History: 1975 c. 371; 1993 a. 112.

628.09 Temporary licenses. (1) ISSUANCE OF LICENSE. Except as provided in s. 628.095 or 628.097, the commissioner may issue a temporary license as an intermediary for a period of not more than 12 months to the personal representative of a deceased or mentally disabled intermediary, or to a person designated by an intermediary who is otherwise disabled or has entered active duty in the U.S. armed forces, in order to give time for more favorable sale of the goodwill of a business owned by the intermediary, for the recovery or return of the intermediary, or for the orderly training and licensing of new personnel for the intermediary's business.

(2) LIMITATION ON AUTHORITY. The commissioner may by order limit the authority of any temporary licensee in any way deemed necessary to protect insureds and the public. The commissioner may require the temporary licensee to have a suitable sponsor who is a licensed intermediary or insurer and who assumes full legal responsibility for all acts and omissions of the temporary licensee, may impose special bonding requirements and may impose other similar requirements designed to protect insureds and the public.

(3) EXAMINATIONS. The commissioner may administer an examination as a prerequisite to the issuance of a temporary license.

(4) DURATION OF LICENSE. The commissioner may by order revoke a temporary license if the interests of insureds or the public are endangered. A temporary license may not be extended beyond the initial period specified under sub. (1). A temporary license

may not continue after the owner or the personal representative disposes of the business.

(5) FEES. The fees for a temporary license are the same as for a permanent license.

(6) STATUS OF TEMPORARY LICENSEE. A temporary licensee is a fully qualified intermediary for all purposes other than the process of licensing, the duration of the license and the limits imposed under sub. (2).

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1981 c. 38; 1997 a. 191; 2001 a. 65.

Cross Reference: See also ch. Ins 42, Wis. adm. code.

628.095 Social security and federal employer identification numbers on license applications or at time of fee payment. (1) REQUIRED ON APPLICATIONS. An application for a license issued under this subchapter shall contain the applicant's social security number, if the applicant is a natural person unless the applicant does not have a social security number, or the applicant's federal employer identification number, if the applicant is not a natural person.

(2) REFUSAL TO ISSUE LICENSE. The commissioner may not issue a license, including a temporary license, under this subchapter unless the applicant provides his or her social security number, if the applicant is a natural person unless the applicant does not have a social security number, or provides the applicant's federal tax identification number, if the applicant is not a natural person.

(3) REQUIRED WHEN ANNUAL FEE PAID. At the time that the annual fee is paid under s. 601.31 (1) (m), an intermediary who is a natural person shall provide his or her social security number unless the intermediary does not have a social security number, and an intermediary that is not a natural person shall provide its federal employer identification number, if the social security number or federal employer identification number was not provided on the application for the license or previously when the annual fee was paid.

(4) DISCLOSURE. (a) The commissioner shall disclose a social security number obtained under sub. (1) or (3) to the department of workforce development in the administration of s. 49.22, as provided in a memorandum of understanding entered into under s. 49.857.

(b) The commissioner may disclose any information received under sub. (1) or (3) to the department of revenue for the purpose of requesting certifications under s. 73.0301.

(5) IF APPLICANT OR INTERMEDIARY HAS NO SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER. If an applicant who is a natural person does not have a social security number, the applicant shall provide to the commissioner, along with the application for a license and on a form prescribed by the department of workforce development, a statement made or subscribed under oath or affirmation that the applicant does not have a social security number. If an intermediary who is a natural person does not have a social security number, the intermediary shall provide to the commissioner, each time that the annual fee is paid under s. 601.31 (1) (m) and on a form prescribed by the department of workforce development, a statement made or subscribed under oath or affirmation that the applicant does not have a social security number.

History: 1997 a. 191, 237; 1999 a. 9.

628.097 Refusal to issue license; failure to pay support or to comply with subpoena or warrant; tax delinquency. (1m) FOR FAILURE TO PAY SUPPORT OR TO COMPLY WITH SUBPOENA OR WARRANT. The commissioner shall refuse to issue to a natural person a license, including a temporary license, under this subchapter if the natural person is delinquent in court-ordered payments of child or family support, maintenance, birth expenses, medical expenses or other expenses related to the support of a child or former spouse, or if the natural person fails to comply, after appropriate notice, with a subpoena or warrant issued by the department of workforce development or a county child support agency under s. 59.53 (5) and related to paternity or child support

proceedings, as provided in a memorandum of understanding entered into under s. 49.857.

(2m) FOR LIABILITY FOR DELINQUENT TAXES. The commissioner shall refuse to issue a license, including a temporary license, under this subchapter if the department of revenue certifies under s. 73.0301 that the applicant for the license is liable for delinquent taxes.

History: 1997 a. 191, 237; 2001 a. 65.

628.10 Termination of license. (1) GENERAL. An intermediary's license issued under s. 628.04 remains in force until it is revoked or limited under sub. (2), until it is suspended under sub. (2) or s. 227.51 (3), until it is surrendered or until the licensee dies or is adjudicated incompetent as defined in s. 880.01 (4).

(2) REVOCATION, SUSPENSION, AND LIMITATION OF LICENSES. (a) *For failure to comply with continuing education requirements.* The license of any intermediary who fails to produce evidence of compliance with continuing education standards set by the commissioner is suspended, effective on the day on which the evidence of compliance is due. If an intermediary whose license has been suspended under this paragraph produces evidence of compliance within 60 days after the date on which the license is suspended, the commissioner shall reinstate the license effective on the date of suspension. If such an intermediary does not produce evidence of compliance within 60 days, the license is revoked and the intermediary may be relicensed only after satisfying all requirements under s. 628.04.

(am) *Nonpayment of fees.* The license of an intermediary who fails to pay a fee when due is suspended on and after the date when the fee is due, if the commissioner gave the intermediary reasonable notice that the fee was due and the license would be suspended if timely payment was not made. If the intermediary pays the fee within 60 days after the date it is due, the license is reinstated effective on the date of suspension. If payment is not made within 60 days, the license is revoked and the intermediary may be relicensed only after satisfying all requirements under s. 628.04.

(b) *For other reasons.* Except as provided in pars. (c) to (d), after a hearing, the commissioner may revoke, suspend or limit in whole or in part the license of any intermediary if the commissioner finds that the licensee is unqualified as an intermediary, is not of good character or has repeatedly or knowingly violated an insurance statute or rule or a valid order of the commissioner under s. 601.41 (4), or if the intermediary's methods and practices in the conduct of business endanger, or financial resources are inadequate to safeguard, the legitimate interests of customers and the public. Nothing in this paragraph limits the authority of the commissioner to suspend summarily an intermediary's license under s. 227.51 (3).

(c) *For failure to pay support or to comply with subpoena or warrant.* The commissioner shall suspend or limit the license of an intermediary who is a natural person, or a temporary license of a natural person under s. 628.09, if the natural person is delinquent in court-ordered payments of child or family support, maintenance, birth expenses, medical expenses or other expenses related to the support of a child or former spouse, or if the natural person fails to comply, after appropriate notice, with a subpoena or warrant issued by the department of workforce development or a county child support agency under s. 59.53 (5) and related to paternity or child support proceedings, as provided in a memorandum of understanding entered into under s. 49.857.

(cm) *For liability for delinquent taxes.* The commissioner shall revoke the license of an intermediary, including a temporary license under s. 628.09, if the department of revenue certifies under s. 73.0301 that the intermediary is liable for delinquent taxes.

(cr) *For providing false information in statement.* The commissioner shall revoke the license of an intermediary, including a temporary license under s. 628.09, if the commissioner determines, after a hearing, that the intermediary provided false infor-

mation in a statement provided under s. 628.095 (5) with the intermediary's application or at the time that the annual fee was paid under s. 601.31 (1) (m).

(d) *For failure to provide social security number, federal employer identification number or statement.* If an intermediary fails to provide a social security number or federal employer identification number as required under s. 628.095 (3) or a statement as required under s. 628.095 (5), the commissioner shall suspend or limit the license of the intermediary, effective the day following the last day on which the annual fee under s. 601.31 (1) (m) may be paid, if the commissioner has given the intermediary reasonable notice of when the fee must be paid to avoid suspension or limitation. If the intermediary provides the social security number, federal employer identification number or statement within 60 days from the effective date of the suspension, the commissioner shall reinstate the intermediary's license effective as of the date of suspension.

(3) DELAY FOR NEW APPLICATION. An order revoking an intermediary's license under sub. (2) may specify a time not to exceed 5 years within which the former intermediary may not apply for a new license. If no time is specified, the intermediary may not apply for 5 years. An intermediary whose license is revoked under sub. (2) (am) may immediately reapply.

(4) PENALTIES. Any intermediary whose license is suspended or revoked shall, when the suspension ends or a new license is issued, pay all fees that would have been payable if the license had not been suspended or revoked, unless the commissioner by order waives the payment of the fees.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1977 c. 363; 1979 c. 102; 1981 c. 38; 1991 a. 214; 1995 a. 27; 1997 a. 191, 237; 1999 a. 9, 30.

628.11 Listing of insurance agents. An insurer shall report to the commissioner at such intervals as the commissioner establishes by rule all appointments, including renewals of appointments, and all terminations of appointments of insurance agents to do business in this state, and shall pay the fees prescribed under s. 601.31 (1) (n).

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1979 c. 102 s. 237; 1981 c. 20 s. 2202 (26) (a); 1995 a. 27.

Cross Reference: See also s. Ins 6.57, Wis. adm. code.

628.12 Liability of surplus lines insurer. If a surplus lines insurer has assumed a risk and if the premium therefor has been received by the surplus lines agent or broker who placed the insurance, then as between the insurer and the insured the insurer is deemed to have received the premium due to it for the coverage; and the insurer is liable to the insured for losses covered by the insurance and for unearned premiums upon cancellation of the insurance, whether or not the surplus lines agent or broker is indebted to the insurer. Each surplus lines insurer assuming a surplus lines risk under this section thereby subjects itself to the terms of this section.

History: 1975 c. 371.

SUBCHAPTER III

MARKETING PRACTICES

628.31 Sale of insurance through vending machines. No insurance policies may be sold by a vending machine except policies of personal travel accident insurance providing benefits for accidental bodily injury or accidental death.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1979 c. 102 s. 237; 1981 c. 20, 38.

628.32 Disclosure required. (1) An intermediary may not accept compensation from an insured or from both an insured and another source due to the insured's purchase of insurance or for advice regarding the insured's insurance needs or coverage unless the intermediary, before the insured incurs an obligation to pay compensation, clearly and conspicuously and in writing discloses to the insured all of the following:

(a) The amount of compensation to be paid by the insured, excluding commissions paid by the insurer to the intermediary.

(b) If compensation will be paid by another source, the fact that the intermediary will also receive compensation from the other source.

(2) The commissioner may promulgate rules prescribing the form for disclosure under sub. (1).

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1981 c. 38; 1987 a. 247.

628.34 Unfair marketing practices. (1) MISREPRESENTATION. (a) *Conduct forbidden.* No person who is or should be licensed under chs. 600 to 646, no employee or agent of any such person, no person whose primary interest is as a competitor of a person licensed under chs. 600 to 646, and no person on behalf of any of the foregoing persons may make or cause to be made any communication relating to an insurance contract, the insurance business, any insurer or any intermediary which contains false or misleading information, including information misleading because of incompleteness. Filing a report and, with intent to deceive a person examining it, making a false entry in a record or willfully refraining from making a proper entry, are “communications” within the meaning of this paragraph. No intermediary or insurer may use any business name, slogan, emblem or related device that is misleading or likely to cause the intermediary or insurer to be mistaken for another insurer or intermediary already in business.

(b) *Presumption of insurer’s violation.* If an insurance agent distributes cards or documents, exhibits a sign or publishes an advertisement which violates par. (a), having reference to a particular insurer that the agent represents, the agent’s violation creates a rebuttable presumption that the violation was also committed by the insurer.

(2) **UNFAIR INDUCEMENTS.** (a) *General.* No insurer, no employee of an insurer, and no insurance intermediary may seek to induce any person to enter into an insurance contract or to terminate an existing insurance contract by offering benefits not specified in the policy, nor may any insurer make any agreement of insurance that is not clearly expressed in the policy to be issued. This subsection does not preclude the reduction of premiums by reason of expense savings, including commission reductions, resulting from any form of mass marketing.

(b) *Absorption of tax.* No agent, broker or insurer may absorb the tax under s. 618.43 (2).

(3) **UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION.** (a) No insurer may unfairly discriminate among policyholders by charging different premiums or by offering different terms of coverage except on the basis of classifications related to the nature and the degree of the risk covered or the expenses involved, subject to ss. 632.365, 632.746 and 632.748. Rates are not unfairly discriminatory if they are averaged broadly among persons insured under a group, blanket or franchise policy, and terms are not unfairly discriminatory merely because they are more favorable than in a similar individual policy.

(b) No insurer may refuse to insure or refuse to continue to insure, or limit the amount, extent or kind of coverage available to an individual, or charge an individual a different rate for the same coverage because of a mental or physical disability except when the refusal, limitation or rate differential is based on either sound actuarial principles supported by reliable data or actual or reasonably anticipated experience, subject to ss. 632.746 to 632.7495.

(4) **RESTRAINT OF COMPETITION.** No person who is or should be licensed under chs. 600 to 646, no employee or agent of any such person, no person whose primary interest is as a competitor of a person licensed under chs. 600 to 646, and no one acting on behalf of any of the foregoing persons, may commit or enter into any agreement to participate in any act of boycott, coercion or intimidation tending to unreasonable restraint of the business of insurance or to monopoly in that business.

(5) **FREE CHOICE OF INSURER.** No person may restrict in the choice of an insurer or insurance intermediary another person required to pay the cost of insurance coverage whenever the procurement of insurance coverage is required as a condition for the conclusion of a contract or other transaction or for the exercise of any right under a contract. However, the person requiring the coverage may reserve the right to disapprove on reasonable grounds the insurer or the coverage selected. The form of corporate organization of an insurer authorized to do business in this state is not a reasonable ground for disapproval, and the commissioner may by rule specify that additional grounds are not reasonable.

(6) **EXTRA CHARGES.** No person may make any charge other than premiums and premium financing charges for the protection of property or of a security interest in property, as a condition for obtaining, renewing or continuing the financing of a purchase of the property or the lending of money on the security of an interest in the property.

(7) **INFLUENCING EMPLOYERS.** No insurer or insurance intermediary or employee or agent of either may, in connection with an insurance transaction, encourage, persuade or attempt to influence any employer to refuse employment to or to discharge any person arbitrarily or unreasonably.

(8) **USE OF OFFICIAL POSITION.** No person holding an elective, appointive or civil service position in federal, state or local government may use decision-making power or influence in that position to coerce the placement of insurance for any prospective policyholder through any particular intermediary or with any particular insurer.

(9) **REFUSAL TO RETURN INDICIA OF AGENCY.** No agent may refuse or fail to return promptly all indicia of agency to the principal on demand.

(10) **INSURANCE SECURITY FUND.** No insurer or insurance intermediary may make use in any manner of the protection given policyholders by ch. 646 as a reason for buying insurance from the insurer or intermediary.

(11) **OTHER UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES.** No person may engage in any other unfair method of competition or any other unfair or deceptive act or practice in the business of insurance, as defined under sub. (12).

(12) **RULES DEFINING UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES.** The commissioner may define specific unfair trade practices by rule, after a finding that they are misleading, deceptive, unfairly discriminatory, provide an unfair inducement, or restrain competition unreasonably.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1979 c. 89, 109, 313, 355; 1991 a. 279; 1995 a. 289; 1997 a. 27, 237.

Cross Reference: See also ss. Ins 3.27, 6.67, and 6.68, Wis. adm. code.

Any administrative rule requiring dissemination of cost disclosure information that is misleading due to incompleteness is beyond the scope of the insurance commissioner’s authority in that it violates sub. (1) (a). Aetna Life Insurance Co. v. Mitchell, 101 Wis. 2d 90, 303 N.W.2d 639 (1981).

There is no private right of action to enforce sub. (3). NAACP v. American Family Mutual Insurance Co. 978 F.2d 287 (1992).

628.345 Prohibited practices during license revocation or surrender. (1) In this section:

(a) “Disciplinary period” means the period of time beginning on the effective date of the termination of the license of an intermediary under par. (b) 1. and ending on the date on which a new license is issued to the intermediary. The “disciplinary period” of a person under par. (b) 2., 3. or 4. is the disciplinary period of the intermediary under par. (b) 1. through which the person attains the status of “disciplined person”.

(b) “Disciplined person” means any of the following:

1. An intermediary whose license is revoked under s. 628.10 (2) (b) or surrendered under a stipulation.
2. An affiliate of an intermediary under subd. 1.
3. A person in which an intermediary under subd. 1. has, directly or indirectly, more than a 10% ownership interest.

4. An agent or employee of a person described in subd. 1., 2. or 3.

(2) During the disciplinary period of a disciplined person, the disciplined person may not be employed by, act as agent for, or be affiliated with, a person engaged in the business of an insurance intermediary.

(3) No person may do any of the following with respect to activities performed in this state:

(a) Pay consideration to, or expenses of, a disciplined person that directly or indirectly relate to services performed as an intermediary by the disciplined person during the disciplinary period of the disciplined person.

(b) Pay consideration to, or expenses of, a disciplined person that directly or indirectly relate to services performed as an intermediary by the person making the payment, or by an agent, employee or affiliate of that person, during the disciplinary period of the disciplined person.

(c) Pay consideration to, or expenses of, a disciplined person for information directly or indirectly provided by the disciplined person during the disciplinary period of the disciplined person for the purpose of assisting in the sale of insurance.

(d) Seek to obtain information from, or use information directly or indirectly provided by, a disciplined person during the disciplinary period of the disciplined person for the purpose of assisting in the sale of insurance.

(e) During the disciplinary period of a disciplined person, permit the disciplined person to be present during solicitation of the sale of insurance, or knowingly solicit the sale of insurance with the assistance of the disciplined person, regardless of whether the disciplined person acts as an intermediary.

(f) During the disciplinary period of a disciplined person, use or refer to an endorsement or referral by the disciplined person for the purpose of soliciting the sale of insurance.

(4) (a) Except as provided in par. (b), this section applies to all of the following:

1. A disciplined person for whom the disciplinary period is in effect on or after January 1, 1997.

2. That portion of a disciplinary period in effect on or after January 1, 1997, that occurs on and after January 1, 1997.

(b) This section does not apply to an obligation incurred before January 1, 1997, for the payment of consideration to, or expenses of, a disciplined person related to services performed or information provided during the disciplinary period of the disciplined person but before January 1, 1997.

History: 1995 a. 396.

628.35 Prohibition of exclusive contracts. No insurer may make, enforce or participate in any contract or other arrangement for exclusive services of a health care provider that prevents or materially inhibits any other insurer authorized to do business in this state from entering into a contract or other arrangement with any health care provider of services that the other insurer has contracted to supply or for which it has promised indemnity under its insurance contracts, unless:

(1) The health care provider is an individual who is an employee of the insurer;

(2) The health care provider is a corporation owned by the insurer;

(3) The health care provider uses the insurer's name under a franchise arrangement; or

(4) The case is within a class for which the commissioner by rule establishes an exception after a finding that the contract or other arrangement does not seriously impede the effective operation of a legitimate insurance business by other insurers.

History: 1975 c. 223, 371, 422.

628.36 Limitations on corporations supplying health care services. (1) **PAYMENT METHODS.** Any corporation operating a voluntary health care plan may pay health care profes-

sionals on a salary, per patient or fee-for-service basis to provide health care to policyholders or beneficiaries of the corporation.

(2) **DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PROFESSIONALS.** (a) In this section:

1. "Health care plan" means an insurance contract providing coverage of health care expenses.

2. "Provider" means a health care professional, a health care facility or a health care service or organization.

(b) 1. Except for health maintenance organizations, preferred provider plans and limited service health organizations, no health care plan may prevent any person covered under the plan from choosing freely among providers who have agreed to participate in the plan and abide by its terms, except by requiring the person covered to select primary providers to be used when reasonably possible.

2. No provider may be required to participate exclusively in a health care plan as a condition of participation in it.

3. Except as provided in subd. 4., no provider may be denied the opportunity to participate in a health care plan, other than a health maintenance organization, a limited service health organization or a preferred provider plan, under the terms of the plan.

4. Any health care plan may exclude a provider from participation in the health care plan for cause related to the practice of his or her profession.

5. All health care plans, including health maintenance organizations, limited service health organizations and preferred provider plans are subject to s. 632.87 (3).

(2m) **PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES.** (a) In this subsection:

1. "Health maintenance organization" has the meaning given in s. 609.01 (2).

2. "Limited service health organization" has the meaning given in s. 609.01 (3).

2m. "Pharmaceutical services" do not include the administration of a drug product or device or vaccine under s. 450.035.

3. "Preferred provider plan" has the meaning given in s. 609.01 (4).

(e) 1. A health maintenance organization, limited service health organization or preferred provider plan that provides coverage of pharmaceutical services when performed by one or more pharmacists who are selected by the organization or plan but who are not full-time salaried employees or partners of the organization or plan shall provide an annual period of at least 30 days during which any pharmacist registered under ch. 450 may elect to participate in the health maintenance organization, limited service health organization or preferred provider plan under its terms as a selected provider for at least one year.

2. Except as provided in subd. 3., subd. 1. applies to health maintenance organizations on and after May 10, 1984. Except as provided in subd. 4., subd. 1. applies to limited service health organizations and preferred provider plans on or after April 28, 1990.

3. If compliance with the requirements of subd. 1. during the period specified in subd. 2. would impair any provision of a contract between a health maintenance organization and any other person, and if the contract provision was in existence prior to May 10, 1984, then immediately after the expiration of all such contract provisions the health maintenance organization shall comply with the requirements of subd. 1.

4. If compliance with the requirements of subd. 1. during the period specified in subd. 2. would impair any provision of a contract between a limited service health organization or preferred provider plan and any other person, and if the contract was in existence prior to April 28, 1990, then immediately after the expiration of all such contract provisions the limited service health organization or preferred provider plan shall comply with the requirements of subd. 1.

(3) **EXEMPTION BY RULE.** By rule the commissioner may exempt from the application of any part of subs. (1) to (2m) plans

which provide innovative approaches to the delivery of health care or which are designed to contain health care costs, and which cannot operate successfully consistent with all of the provisions in subs. (1) to (2m). The commissioner may promulgate such a rule only if on a finding that the interests of the public require such plans as an experiment, to supply health care services that are not otherwise available in adequate quantity or quality, or to contain health care costs. The promulgated rule shall be as narrow as is compatible with the success of the plans.

(4) FACILITATING COST-EFFECTIVE PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES. (a) The commissioner shall provide information and assistance to the department of employee trust funds, employers and their employees, providers of health care services and members of the public, as provided in par. (b), for the following purposes:

1. To facilitate the development and implementation of health care plans that provide innovative approaches to the delivery of health care services or that are designed to contain health care costs.

2. To increase the awareness and understanding among employers and their employees, providers of health care services and members of the public regarding the availability and nature of innovative or cost-effective health care plans.

(b) The commissioner's responsibilities in accomplishing the purposes set forth in par. (a) shall include all of the following:

1. Assisting the department of employee trust funds in the development of health care plans under s. 40.51 (7).

2. Providing employers and their employees with information regarding the availability and nature of health care coverage that may be obtained under s. 40.51 (7).

3. Providing information to employers regarding how to proceed under s. 40.51 (7) to obtain health care coverage for their employees.

4. Providing information to employers and their employees and members of the public regarding the availability and nature of various kinds of health care plans, including their distinct and contrasting characteristics.

5. Providing information to employers and their employees, providers of health care services and members of the public regarding the relative effectiveness of various kinds of health care plans in containing health care costs.

History: 1975 c. 223, 371, 422; 1983 a. 27, 192, 321, 396; 1985 a. 29; 1987 a. 27; 1989 a. 31, 215; 1991 a. 250; 1997 a. 27, 68; 1997 a. 237 s. 727m.

628.37 Preservation of professional relationships in professional services. No insurance plan related to or providing health care, legal or other professional services may alter the direct relationship and responsibility of professional persons to their patients or clients for the professional services rendered. All professional relationships are subject to the same rules of contract and tort law and professional ethics as if no insurance plan were involved.

History: 1975 c. 223, 371, 422.

628.38 Disclosure requirements. The commissioner may by rule require insurers to deliver to prospective buyers of life or disability insurance, at a time specified in the rule, information consistent with ss. 601.01 and 628.34 that will improve their ability to select appropriate coverage.

History: 1981 c. 82.

628.39 Extension of credit on premiums. The extension of credit to the insured upon a premium without interest for not exceeding 60 days from the effective date of the policy, or after that time with interest at not less than the legal rate nor more than 18% per year on the unpaid balance, is permissible. The payment of premiums on policies issued under a mass marketing program on an installment basis through payroll deductions is not an extension of credit.

History: 1975 c. 371; 1979 c. 110 s. 60 (13); 1983 a. 215.

628.40 Effect of agent's appointment on insurer. Every insurer is bound by any act of its agent performed in this state that is within the scope of the agent's apparent authority, while the agency contract remains in force and after that time until the insurer has made reasonable efforts to recover from the agent its policy forms and other indicia of agency. Reasonable efforts shall include a formal demand in writing for return of the indicia, and notice to the commissioner if the agent does not comply with the demand promptly.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421.

628.46 Timely payment of claims. (1) Unless otherwise provided by law, an insurer shall promptly pay every insurance claim. A claim shall be overdue if not paid within 30 days after the insurer is furnished written notice of the fact of a covered loss and of the amount of the loss. If such written notice is not furnished to the insurer as to the entire claim, any partial amount supported by written notice is overdue if not paid within 30 days after such written notice is furnished to the insurer. Any part or all of the remainder of the claim that is subsequently supported by written notice is overdue if not paid within 30 days after written notice is furnished to the insurer. Any payment shall not be deemed overdue when the insurer has reasonable proof to establish that the insurer is not responsible for the payment, notwithstanding that written notice has been furnished to the insurer. For the purpose of calculating the extent to which any claim is overdue, payment shall be treated as being made on the date a draft or other valid instrument which is equivalent to payment was placed in the U.S. mail in a properly addressed, postpaid envelope, or, if not so posted, on the date of delivery. All overdue payments shall bear simple interest at the rate of 12% per year.

(2) Notwithstanding sub. (1), the payment of a claim shall not be overdue until 30 days after the insurer receives the proof of loss required under the policy or equivalent evidence of such loss. The payment of a claim shall not be overdue during any period in which the insurer is unable to pay such claim because there is no recipient who is legally able to give a valid release for such payment, or in which the insurer is unable to determine who is entitled to receive such payment, if the insurer has promptly notified the claimant of such inability and has offered in good faith to promptly pay said claim upon determination of who is entitled to receive such payment.

(2m) (a) Notwithstanding subs. (1) and (2) and except as provided in par. (b), a claim for payment for chiropractic services is overdue if not paid within 30 days after the insurer receives clinical documentation from the chiropractor that the services were provided unless, within those 30 days, the insurer provides to the insured and to the chiropractor the written statement under s. 632.875 (2).

(b) Paragraph (a) does not apply to any of the following:

1. Worker's compensation insurance.

2. Any line of property and casualty insurance except disability insurance. In this subdivision, "disability insurance" does not include uninsured motorist coverage, underinsured motorist coverage, or medical payment coverage.

(3) This section applies only to the classes of claims enumerated in s. 646.31 (2).

History: 1975 c. 375; 1979 c. 109 s. 16; 1979 c. 110 s. 60 (13); 1981 c. 38 s. 24; Stats. 1981 s. 628.46; 2001 a. 16, 65.

Receipt of a legally binding offer to settle a claim against the insured is not required for the insured to have a claim against the insurer for bad-faith failure to settle. *Alt v. American Family Mutual Insurance Co.* 71 Wis. 2d 340, 237 N.W.2d 706 (1976).

Insured may bring tort action against insurer for failure to exercise good faith in settling insured's claim. This section is unrelated to such tort action. *Anderson v. Continental Insurance Co.* 85 Wis. 2d 675, 271 N.W.2d 368 (1978).

The tort of bad faith handling of a claim is discussed. *Davis v. Allstate Ins. Co.* 101 Wis. 2d 1, 303 N.W.2d 596 (1981).

A third-party claimant cannot assert a bad faith claim against an insurer. *Kranzush v. Badger State Mutual Casualty Co.* 103 Wis. 2d 56, 307 N.W.2d 256 (1981).

This section applies to service insurance corporations. *Physicians Service Insurance Corp. v. Mitchell*, 114 Wis. 2d 338, 338 N.W.2d 326 (Ct. App. 1983).

A jury's imposition of punitive damages and finding of bad faith is adequate to show that the insurer did not have reasonable proof that it was not responsible for a claim and supports an award of prejudgment interest under sub. (1). *Upthegrove v.*

Lumbermans Mutual Insurance Co. 146 Wis. 2d 470, 431 N.W.2d 689 (Ct. App. 1988).

Interest under s. 807.01 (4) is not in addition to interest under sub. (1). *Upthegrove v. Lumbermans Insurance Co.* 152 Wis. 2d 7, 447 N.W.2d 367 (Ct. App. 1989).

This section makes no distinction between the payment of claims based on judgments and all other claims; a claim may be due under sub. (2) far in advance of a judgment or award. *Fritsche v. Ford Motor Credit Co.* 171 Wis. 2d 280, 491 N.W.2d 119 (Ct. App. 1992).

Whether to assess 12% interest is dependent on whether the insurer had reasonable proof establishing that it was not responsible for payment. *U.S. Fire Insurance Co. v. Good Humor Corp.* 173 Wis. 2d 804, 496 N.W.2d 730 (Ct. App. 1993).

This section applies to all insurers. *Allison v. Ticor Title Ins. Co.* 979 F.2d 1187 (1992).

Excess liability insurance. *Griffin.* 62 MLR 375 (1979).

628.48 Risk retention groups. (1) PROHIBITED MARKETING. A risk retention group may not do any of the following:

(a) Solicit or sell insurance to any person who is not eligible for membership in the risk retention group.

(b) Solicit or sell insurance or otherwise operate if the risk retention group is in a hazardous financial condition or is financially impaired.

(2) NOTICE IN POLICIES. A risk retention group may not issue an insurance policy unless the following notice, in 10–point type, is included on the front page and declarations page of the policy:

NOTICE

This policy is issued by your risk retention group. Your risk retention group may not be subject to all of the insurance laws and regulations of your state. State insurance insolvency guaranty funds are not available for your risk retention group.

History: 1987 a. 247.

628.49 Regulation of managing general agents, reinsurance brokers and managers and controlling producers. After considering the applicable model acts adopted by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, the commissioner may promulgate rules that are reasonably necessary to regulate the business practices and transactions of the following:

- (1) Managing general agents.
- (2) Reinsurance brokers.
- (3) Reinsurance managers.
- (4) Intermediaries that control an insurer.

History: 1991 a. 269.

SUBCHAPTER IV

COMPENSATION OF INTERMEDIARIES

628.51 Controlled business. No intermediary may receive any compensation from an insurer for effecting insurance upon the intermediary's property, life or other risk unless during the preceding 12 months the intermediary had effected other insurance with the same insurer with aggregate premiums exceeding the premiums on the intermediary's risks.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421.

628.61 Sharing commissions. (1) PROHIBITION. No intermediary or insurer may pay any consideration, nor reimburse out-of-pocket expenses, to any natural person for services performed within this state as an intermediary if he or she knows or should know that the payee is not licensed under s. 628.04 or 628.09. No natural person may accept compensation for service performed as an intermediary unless the natural person is licensed under s. 628.04 or 628.09.

(2) EXCEPTIONS. This section does not prohibit:

(a) The payment of deferred commissions to formerly licensed agent and broker intermediaries or their assignees; or

(b) The proper exchange of business between agent and broker intermediaries lawfully licensed in this state.

History: 1975 c. 371, 421; 1979 c. 102; 1981 c. 38.

Cross Reference: See also s. *Ins* 6.66, Wis. adm. code.

628.78 Benefit plans for agents. A domestic insurer may establish retirement, insurance and other benefit plans for agents on an actuarial basis approved by the commissioner.

History: 1975 c. 371.

628.81 Filing of commission rates paid to agents and brokers. Every insurer shall at or prior to the filing of its application for a certificate of authority file such information as the commissioner requests about the percentages and kinds of commissions paid to agents and brokers within this state, as well as the amounts of any fixed salaries if they are supplemented by commissions. It shall supply amended information promptly after any major change, and whenever the commissioner requests by rule or by order.

History: 1975 c. 371.