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**P.O.V.'s "Critical Condition" Reveals Impact of Being Sick and Uninsured
In America, Tuesday, Sept. 30, Special Broadcast at 9 p.m. on PBS**

Produced in Association with Thirteen/WNET New York

Stay tuned for "Rx for Change," a MacNeil/Lehrer Productions Special
Following the Broadcast at 10:30 p.m.

"As health care costs soar and insurance coverage moves out of reach for more and more Americans, Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Roger Weisberg presents moving tales about a diverse group of people trying to negotiate a health care system that's unsympathetic and unresponsive to their needs."

– San Jose Mercury News

MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET

National Air

Date: Special broadcast of **Critical Condition** airs **Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2008** at 9 p.m. on PBS, followed at 10:30 p.m. by the MacNeil/Lehrer special "Rx for Change," which explores the presidential candidates' proposals for health care reform. (Check local listings.) **P.O.V.** (a cinema term for "point of view"), now in its 21st year, is the longest-running independent documentary showcase on television.

In Spanish:

National Spanish-language network V-me will air a one-hour version of **Critical Condition** on **Wednesday, Oct. 8** at 10 p.m. ET and **Saturday, Oct. 11** at 8 p.m. ET. V-me is presented locally by public television stations and carried on basic digital cable and digital broadcast in many cities and nationally on DIRECTV and DIRECTV Más channel 440, DISH Network Ch 9414 and DISH Latino Ch 846. Check local listings or www.VmeTV.com for more information.

In addition:

P.O.V. will focus on health care for two consecutive nights. On **Wednesday, Oct. 1** at 10 p.m., P.O.V. presents Joanna Rudnick's **In the Family**, about her experiences upon discovering she has the "breast cancer gene."

Description:

What happens if you fall sick and are one of 47 million people in America without health insurance? **Critical Condition** by Roger Weisberg ("Waging a Living," P.O.V. 2006) puts a human face on the nation's growing health care crisis by capturing the harrowing struggles of four critically ill Americans who discover that being uninsured can cost them their jobs, health, home, savings, even their lives. Filmed in vérité style, **Critical Condition** offers a moving and invaluable exposé at a time when the nation is debating how to extend health insurance to all Americans. *A production of Public Policy Productions in association with Thirteen/WNET New York and American Documentary / P.O.V.*

Immediately following the 90-minute broadcast, PBS's MacNeil/Lehrer Productions will present a half-hour special at 10:30 p.m. "Rx for Change" is a discussion of the top health insurance concerns facing Americans. Moderated by Editor of the *Journal Health Affairs* and former *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* Health Correspondent Susan Dentzer, the panel examines issues of health care coverage and costs.

"Rx for Change" features two nonpartisan health care experts, Uwe Reinhardt from Princeton University and Stuart Butler from the Heritage Foundation. Two members of the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns also participate: for Senator Barack Obama's campaign, domestic policy director Neera Tanden, former policy director for Senator Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign; for Senator John McCain's campaign, senior policy advisor Douglas Holtz-Eakin. Prior to the campaign, he was with the Council on Foreign Relations and was director of the Congressional Budget Office.

Bio: Roger Weisberg, Director/Producer

Veteran documentary filmmaker Weisberg's 30 previous films have earned over 100 awards, including Emmy, duPont-Columbia and Peabody awards, as well as two Academy Award nominations (in 2001 for "Sound and Fury" and in 2003 for "Why Can't We Be a Family Again?"). He has made the American health care system a special focus of his work with such films as "What's Ailing Medicine," "Our Children at Risk," "Borderline Medicine," "Who Lives-Who Dies" and "Can't Afford to Grow Old."

Statement: "Many of my previous documentaries have taken viewers inside the nation's embattled health care system," says Weisberg. "In making **Critical Condition**, I wanted to build on my previous work in order to contribute to this historically significant moment when the nation considers how to extend health insurance coverage to all Americans. During just the 90-minute running time of this film, an additional 377 Americans will lose medical coverage. I hope **Critical Condition** will be a call to action as the health care reform debate heats up."

Film subjects: **Joe Stornaiuolo** of Bethlehem, Penn., a doorman for 15 years, loses his job and ultimately his health insurance. Unable to afford the medication or doctor visits he needs to manage his chronic liver disease, Joe runs up bills in excess of \$60,000. When he finally qualifies for Social Security Disability, he discovers that his income is too great to qualify for Medicaid, and there's a two-year waiting period to qualify for Medicare. Despite the support and care of his wife, Dale, Joe's condition deteriorates, and he passes away just before Christmas. With a grandchild she now must raise alone and bills she can never hope to repay, Dale attributes Joe's death to his lack of medical coverage.

Karen Dove of Austin, Texas, loses her insurance when her deteriorating health forces her to quit her job as an apartment manager. When she begins experiencing severe recurrent abdominal pains, the doctors she contacts refuse to treat uninsured patients. A year later, after she finally finds a gynecologic oncologist willing to treat her, she is diagnosed with Stage 3 ovarian cancer. Karen undergoes surgery and chemotherapy, which drives her cancer into remission but sinks her family deep into debt. She and her husband are forced to move, and Karen must forego expensive treatment and medication. A year after an operation, Karen's cancer recurs. Sadly, she passed away in March 2008, after the production of **Critical Condition** was completed.

Hector Cardenas, a Los Angeles warehouse manager with diabetes, opted to amputate his infected foot before losing his job and medical benefits. When his coverage lapses, he struggles to repair his broken temporary prosthesis on his own. He cannot walk properly or earn money without a permanent prosthesis, but he cannot afford the permanent prosthesis without a job that offers basic medical benefits. Hector is behind on rent and is forced to move into a single room in a nearby motel. After a year without finding a job, he is hired at a new company. He hopes that he can stay healthy enough to survive the probation period until he qualifies for insurance, but he still worries that the company's policy will not cover his pre-existing conditions.

Carlos Benitez, an uninsured chef at a restaurant in Los Angeles, has a severe back deformity that has caused him 15 years of unbearable pain and taken seven inches off his height. After learning that the county hospital will not perform surgery, he travels to Mexico City to find an affordable cure, and orthopedic specialists there recommend he have surgery. Even though the cost is a fraction of what it would be in the U.S., he still

can't afford it. Then Carlos experiences what he calls a miracle. Dr. Patrick Dowling, the Chief of the Department of Family Medicine at UCLA, who had seen Carlos a local health fair, makes a rare exception and arranges for a private orthopedic hospital and team of surgeons to waive their \$300,000 fees for Carlos's operation.

Credits: Director/producer: Roger Weisberg
Co-directors/-producers: Jilann Spitzmiller (California), Heather Courtney (Texas)
Editors: Sandra Christie, Christopher White
Composer: Richard Fiocca

Critical Condition is a production of Public Policy Productions, Inc., in association with Thirteen/WNET New York and American Documentary | P.O.V.

Funding for **Critical Condition** was provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Charles A. Frueauff Foundation, the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York Community Trust, the Park Foundation, the Public Welfare Foundation, Public Broadcasting Service, the Silverweed Foundation, the Spunk Fund and the Trull Foundation.

Running Time: 86:46

P.O.V. Web: The **Critical Condition** companion website (www.pbs.org/pov/criticalcondition/) offers a streaming version of the entire film for 90 days after broadcast (until November 11), interview with filmmaker Roger Weisberg; a list of related websites, organizations and books; a downloadable discussion guide and classroom activity; and special features:

- Basic Facts About the Uninsured: Find out more about the uninsured in the U.S., health care spending and the consequences of lack of coverage. Read about governmental and national health care plans, the presidential candidates' viewpoints and today's current legislation.
- Additional Video: Two Families Struggle Without Insurance: Watch two additional stories from filmmaker Roger Weisberg about ordinary Americans families who are struggling without insurance.
- Take Action: Learn more about national organizations that are pushing the next president and Congress to move the nation toward health care reform.
- Free Healthcare Mash-up Map (launches Sept. 30): This searchable database enables Americans locate providers in their communities, including free clinics, community health centers, primary care services and state-sponsored children's insurance plans.
- Original Three-Part Podcast Series:
 - Audio Podcast #1 – Healthcare Positions of Presidential Candidates: Representatives from the McCain and Obama campaigns debate the finer points of each candidate's health care plans at the California Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. Participants: E. Richard Brown, Director, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, Health Policy Advisor, 2008 Barack Obama Presidential Campaign; and Douglas Holtz-Eakin, Economist; Senior Policy Advisor, 2008 John McCain Presidential Campaign.
 - Audio Podcast #2 – The Economics of Health Care in the U.S. and Abroad (launches Sept. 30): WNYC's Political Director Andrea Bernstein interviews Princeton economist Uwe Reinhardt about the candidates' plans, the lessons the United States might learn from the experiences of other countries and how rising health care costs are affecting the U.S. economy.
 - Audio Podcast #3 – Options for the Uninsured (launches Oct. 3): We have nearly 47 million uninsured Americans who may require health care at some point in 2008. Where should they go? Based on the information gathered for the Healthcare Mash-up Map we will bring together experts to discuss options available for the uninsured.

- Presidential Plans in Action (launches Sept. 30): Shortened versions of each character's story with detailed information about how their situations would be affected by the candidates' proposed plans for health care reform.

Awards &
Festivals:

Trenton Film Festival, May 2008, *Documentary Award*
 Philafilm: International Film Festival, Philadelphia, June 2008, *Leigh Whipper Gold Award, Best Documentary*
 Worldfest – Houston International Film Festival, April 2008, *Gold Remi Award*
 New Jersey International Film Festival, Rutgers University, June 2008, *Documentary Award*
 Cinequest Film Festival, San Jose, Calif., March 2008
 Tiburon International Film Festival, Tiburon, Calif., March 2008
 Arizona International Film Festival, Tucson, March 2008
 Film Society of Lincoln Center's Independents Night, New York, June 2008
 Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, New York, June 2008
 Breckenridge Film Festival, Colorado, June 2008
 Rhode Island International Film Festival, Providence, August 2008

Outreach:

P.O.V. is working with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in **Critical Condition**. For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events, go to: http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php

P.O.V. also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a facilitation guide with discussion questions and background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film's content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan. Paul A. Bareño of the San Diego Public Library has created a multimedia resource list of related fiction and nonfiction books and videos that further explore the issues. The materials are available free of charge at: www.pbs.org/pov/criticalcondition/.

The **Critical Condition** Outreach Campaign, co-managed by P.O.V. and Outreach Extensions, is made possible by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Charles A. Frueauff Foundation, the California Endowment, the California Health Care Foundation, the Commonwealth Fund, the Fledgling Fund, the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, the Missouri Foundation for Health, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the Park Foundation, the Public Welfare Foundation, the Spunk Fund and the Trull Foundation.

Pressroom:

Visit P.O.V.'s pressroom, www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom, for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

P.O.V.:

Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and celebrating its 21st season on PBS in 2008, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. Airing June through October, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought more than 250 award-winning documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information about P.O.V. is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, The Fledgling Fund, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, The September 11th Fund, and public television viewers. Funding for P.O.V.'s *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and Thirteen/WNET New York.

DVD REQUESTS: Please note that a broadcast version of this film is available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.

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