



## **THE RLJ COMPANIES ACQUIRES EQUITY STAKE IN MINORITY CONTROLLED INSURANCE SERVICES FIRM TO FOCUS ON MEDICAL STOP-LOSS**

**BETHESDA, MD//SEPTEMBER 8, 2010//**Robert L. Johnson, founder and chairman of The RLJ Companies (RLJ), has entered into an equity arrangement with AV International, LLC (AVI), a minority business insurance firm providing services for state government, municipal and corporate clients.

The initial focus is on expanding AVI's reach and capabilities in the stop-loss market. AVI, through its AMERIFIRST division, has the capability to underwrite and place stop-loss coverage with the support of large national insurance carriers.

Stop loss insurance (also called *excess loss insurance* and sometimes *reinsurance*) provides protection against catastrophic or unpredictable costs. Under a stop loss policy, the insurance company reimburses the employer for legitimate health claims that exceed certain limits.

“When it comes to premium spend, insurance companies have faced a challenge in complying with diversity requirements set forth by states, towns, municipalities and corporations because there were no minority owned or controlled insurance companies with proper qualifications and ratings,” said Andre Duggin, CEO of AVI. “We have now changed that model. Not only do we have the ability to underwrite on behalf of our carriers, we also have the ability to participate in a share of the risk. This will allow our clients to significantly amplify their diversity spend.”

“AVI's years of experience and background in the insurance industry provide us with an excellent opportunity to grow in the insurance stop-loss sector,” said Johnson. “RLJ's commitment to providing access to top insurance industry leaders and managerial support will maximize opportunities for AVI,” he concluded.

“AVI provides a wide array of stop-loss options and product flexibility necessary to meet the needs and expectations in today's marketplace,” says Russell Naylor, founder of Elite Underwriting Services, the largest privately owned Managing General Underwriter in the country and a partner at AVI.

“We take diversity very seriously as it is the cornerstone of our company,” says Duggin. However, we understand that without great service, competitive pricing and best of class products, diversity alone doesn't deliver compelling value. This is why we are very careful to only partner with companies that have a solid reputation, exceptional financial ratings and an unparalleled commitment to service and the community. Having the RLJ Companies on board solidifies and validates our model.”

*(more)*

**About AVI, LLC**

*AVI, LLC is a full service wholesale insurance services firm specializing in cost-effective insurance/reinsurance solutions in workers' compensation, healthcare, property and casualty and employee benefits.*

*AMERIFIRST, the wholesale division of AVI, is the nation's premier minority Managing General Underwriter (MGU) representing A and A+ rated insurance companies assuring high quality and financial stability, key in today's marketplace. AMERIFIRST writes business in all 50 states and maintains a solid client base. AMERIFIRST focuses on providing organizations an opportunity to reach and exceed established goals for Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) participation. For additional information please visit: [www.amerifirstmgu.com](http://www.amerifirstmgu.com).*

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**About The RLJ Companies**

*The RLJ Companies, founded by Robert L. Johnson, is an innovative business network that provides strategic investments in a diverse portfolio of companies. The RLJ Companies seeks to target undiscovered or underserved markets then exercise solid management to achieve results. Within The RLJ Companies portfolio, Johnson owns or holds majority interests in businesses operating in banking, private equity, hospitality, automobile dealerships, entertainment, and video lottery terminal (VLT) gaming. The RLJ Companies is headquartered in Bethesda, MD, with affiliate operations in Charlotte, NC; Orlando, FL; Little Rock, AR; Los Angeles, CA; San Juan, PR; and Monrovia, Liberia. Prior to founding The RLJ Companies, Johnson was founder and chairman of Black Entertainment Television (BET). For additional information please visit: [www.rljcompanies.com](http://www.rljcompanies.com).*

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