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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AVMED HEALTH PLANS RECOGNIZED FOR BECOMING TOBACCO-FREE

GAINESVILLE, FL, April 4, 2011 – AvMed Health Plans was honored today by Tobacco Free Alachua in recognition of becoming a tobacco-free environment.

AvMed's Chief Executive Officer, Michael P. Gallagher and Kay Ayers, Sr. Vice President, HR, Member Services & Facilities, were on hand to accept the award in the lobby of AvMed's Gainesville office. "We are honored to be recognized and proud of our wellness initiatives to encourage a tobacco-free lifestyle for a healthier community," said Gallagher. "Our goal will be to continuously offer encouragement and education toward a smoke-free environment and emphasize the promotion of improved health."

Knowing that tobacco smoke is a proven health hazard to both smokers and non-smokers alike, and that tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, "we have decided that tobacco use is inconsistent with the wellness values of AvMed," added Ayers.

Workplace wellness is an integral part of AvMed Health Plans' business strategy. AvMed offers clients and their employees various wellness initiatives as part of its benefit plan options for Florida's businesses. For AvMed employees statewide, the company is providing the support and resources necessary to assist in improving health by quitting the tobacco habit. "We realize that overcoming a dependence on tobacco can be challenging," added Gallagher. "With that in mind, we encourage all employees who wish to stop smoking to take advantage of the Tobacco Cessation Coaching program."

"Today, AvMed made an important commitment to protect the health and well-being of its staff and visitors by adopting a tobacco-free policy," said Dr. Steven B. Pokorny, Director of Health Promotions at the Alachua County Health Department. "We would like to recognize and congratulate them as they join a growing list of community institutions in Alachua County who have adopted tobacco-free policies."

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About AvMed Health Plans

For more than 40 years, Floridians have joined AvMed for its superior network of doctors, specialists and hospitals; health and wellness programs; and personalized round-the-clock service. AvMed is one of Florida's oldest and largest not-for-profit health plans, and is solely focused on providing health coverage to Florida citizens and businesses. AvMed is one of only a few health plans in the United States that enjoys dual "excellent" accreditation status for both its Commercial and Medicare health plans from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), the nation's top health care quality evaluator. AvMed offers health coverage options to large and small employers in most major markets around the state; Medicare Advantage products in Broward and Miami-Dade counties; and Individual coverage in Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties. For more information about AvMed, visit www.avmed.org.

About Tobacco Free Alachua

Tobacco Free Alachua is a diverse community partnership which fosters collaborative initiatives to develop and promote policies that reduce the use and effects of tobacco. The partnership was established in 2008 and is funded by grants through the Florida Department of Health and supported by the Alachua County Health Department. Membership is free and open to any person who lives, works, or conducts business in Alachua County and supports the mission of the partnership. Tobacco Free Alachua can facilitate the policy adoption process for institutions, organizations, and businesses that chose to become tobacco free. For more information on Tobacco Free Alachua, please contact at 352.334.7914 or tobaccofreealachua@doh.state.fl.us.

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