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News Release



For Release: Immediately
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HARLEYSVILLE GROUP INC. ANNOUNCES CAPITAL MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

- **AUTHORIZES \$25 MILLION SHARE REPURCHASE PROGRAM**
- **DECLARES \$0.30 PER SHARE QUARTERLY DIVIDEND, REPRESENTING 20 PERCENT INCREASE FROM A YEAR AGO**

HARLEYSVILLE, PA—February 19, 2009—The Board of Directors of Harleysville Group Inc. (NASDAQ: HGIC) today authorized the company to repurchase up to an additional 800,000 shares, or approximately \$25 million or about 3 percent, of its outstanding common stock through an open market purchase program.

At the same time, the Board today declared a regular quarterly cash dividend of \$0.30 per share, payable March 30, 2009, to shareholders of record on March 16, 2009. The dividend represents a 20 percent increase over the same period a year ago, and marks the 91st consecutive quarter Harleysville Group has paid a dividend since the company went public in 1986.

“These capital management actions reflect our strong capital position, the steps we’re taking for future earnings growth and our ongoing commitment to managing our capital position effectively for the benefit of our stakeholders,” said Michael L. Browne, Harleysville Group’s president and chief executive officer. “This new stock repurchase program is our fourth since June 2007. When completed, we will have repurchased more than 17 percent of our outstanding shares during that time. And, in our 22 years as a public company we’ve paid our shareholders a dividend every quarter and our dividend has increased every year. In fact, our dividend is up more than 75 percent in the last five years alone.”

The board authorized Harleysville Group to make purchases for a two-year period in the open market or in privately negotiated transactions. Additionally, the board authorized Harleysville Group to make purchases under the terms of a Rule 10b5-1 trading plan, which allows the company to purchase its shares at times when it ordinarily would not be in the market because of self-imposed trading blackout periods, such as the time preceding its quarterly earnings releases. The company currently intends to repurchase shares in open market transactions from the public float, and not repurchase shares from Harleysville Mutual Insurance Company, which owns 52 percent of Harleysville Group’s stock. The timing and terms will be based on market conditions, and will be conducted in accordance with the applicable rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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Harleysville Group announces capital management actions

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Harleysville Insurance is a leading regional provider of insurance products and services for small and mid-sized businesses, as well as for individuals, and ranks among the top 60 U.S. property/casualty insurance groups based on net written premiums. Harleysville was listed recently as #30 in the *InformationWeek 500*, the publication's annual listing of the most innovative information technology organizations in the U.S., and has been ranked on the list in each of the last three years. Harleysville Mutual Insurance Company owns 52 percent of Harleysville Group Inc. (NASDAQ: HGIC), a publicly traded holding company for eight regional property/casualty insurance companies collectively rated A- (Excellent) by A.M. Best Company. Harleysville Group is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market, which is comprised of the top third of all NASDAQ member companies and has the highest initial listing standards of any exchange in the world based on financial and liquidity requirements. Harleysville Group has paid a dividend every quarter since the company went public in 1986, and was one of 3 percent of public companies recognized with a 2007 Mergent Dividend Achiever Award for its long-term history of dividend increases. Harleysville Insurance—which distributes its products exclusively through independent insurance agencies and reflects that commitment to its agency force by being a Trusted Choice[®] company partner—currently operates in 32 eastern and midwestern states. Further information can be found on the company's Web site at www.harleysvillegroup.com.

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