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CSS/Consumers' Checkbook President Robert Krughoff Retires; Veteran Staffer Paul Kallaur to Lead Organization

Krughoff Founded Organization in 1974, Joins Board of Directors;

Kallaur Joined CSS in 1998, Has Overseen Growth, Success of Healthcare Research Group

WASHINGTON—October 13, 2021—The Center for the Study of Services/Consumers' Checkbook today announced that the organization's founder and president Robert Krughoff has retired after 47 years of leadership. Paul Kallaur, vice president of healthcare research, will succeed Krughoff as president.

"While I will join our board of directors and look forward to staying involved in the organization, I am enthusiastic about Paul taking the helm at CSS/Checkbook," Krughoff said. "Paul will continue to lead our Healthcare Research Group and will now oversee our direct-to-consumer information activities in tandem with Checkbook's longtime Executive Editor Kevin Brasler. Paul's leadership skills and track record for success combined with the expertise and energy of our entire team have me feeling very confident in a bright future for the organization of which I am so proud."

At 29, Krughoff started Checkbook after leaving a Washington-area auto repair shop for the third time and realizing his car still hadn't been fixed right. At the time, no organization was evaluating the service providers used by ordinary consumers—plumbers, doctors, veterinarians, roofers, exterminators, and many others. Krughoff developed a plan for how to do this and was able to cobble together support, financial and otherwise. CSS published the first issue of *Washington Consumers' Checkbook* in 1976, later expanding to six more regions and growing its healthcare research operations.

The organization is known for breaking barriers and expanding access to information so consumers can make smarter choices and have better experiences. It has garnered many accolades for its work such as winning a National Press Club First Place Award for Excellence in Consumer Journalism, the Consumer Service Award from the Consumer Federation of America, the Consumers and Patients for Quality Award from the National Quality Forum, and the annual Data Liberator Award from Academy Health.

Kallaur has led CSS's Healthcare Research Group since 1998. He has led the development and implementation of rigorous study designs and survey strategies that consider question formulation, survey design, fielding protocol, data cleaning rules, data analysis methods, and report usability. Under Kallaur's leadership, CSS has obtained eight official CAHPS certifications and approvals from agencies like the National Committee for Quality Assurance and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

"I am thrilled to lead this wonderful organization and will continue to foster the spirit of innovation and integrity Robert has instilled in our work and our culture," Kallaur said. "Our staff is full of talented people, and I can't wait to see what the coming years bring for CSS/Checkbook."

About CSS/Consumers' Checkbook

CSS is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) founded in 1974. CSS is the parent organization of Consumers' Checkbook, which publishes *Checkbook* magazine and its online companion, Checkbook.org. Checkbook, which rates auto repair shops, hospitals, plumbers, veterinarians, doctors, and many other service providers, has localized versions in seven metro areas (Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle-Tacoma, Twin Cities, and Washington, D.C.). A key focus of CSS is on healthcare. It has decades of experience in healthcare surveys, research, analysis, and reporting. It works with research organizations, federal agencies, health plans, healthcare providers, and state insurance exchanges to measure, report, and improve the experiences of healthcare consumers and patients.

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