



For Immediate Release:

**ZOMBIES AND VAMPIRES AID PHYSICIANS MUTUAL
IN TAKING THE FEAR OUT OF RETIREMENT WITH PSYCHOLOGY**

OMAHA, Neb. (March 11, 2019) — Physicians Mutual Insurance Company, based in Omaha, Nebraska, has launched a new brand campaign addressing the “high anxiety” experienced by the ever-increasing number of baby boomers transitioning into retirement.

The spots feature various anxiety-filled “fever dreams” of soon-to-be retirees: late-night zombies calling out the confusion of Medicare in “Nightmares”; a dentist terrifying a patient with Medicare’s lack of dental coverage in “Dr. Acula”; and an employee on the verge of retirement, panicking in the cafeteria about his lack of “coverage” in “Food Fright.”

“Helping people move past their anxiety and retire with confidence is a passion for us at Physicians Mutual,” said Bob Gunia, senior vice president at Physicians Mutual.

The new campaign approach is rooted in a psychological principle that explains how we make purchase decisions. “Cognitive dissonance, the notion of avoiding things that we find unpleasant, can be turned on its head,” said Jake McKenzie, CEO of Intermark Group, the advertising agency for Physicians Mutual. “By taking a scary task and using humor to eliminate the dread that accompanies it, consumers experiencing the same tension know they’re not alone — and are empowered to act.”

All these events are observed and reflected upon by the company’s new brand spokesperson, actor/comedian John Michael Higgins, who spells out the cure for pre-retirement high anxiety and leverages humor to break the tension in stressful retirement planning moments.

“Michael is the perfect fit for the campaign and our brand,” Gunia said. “His quick wit and approachable demeanor add so much to the new spots.”

The spots were created by a team led by the psychology-driven agency Intermark Group based in Birmingham, Alabama, that also included members of the Physicians Mutual in-house creative team. The spots were produced by MJZ production company, with renowned director Craig Gillespie at the helm.

“We wanted A+ production and an A+ director — MJZ and Craig delivered big-time,” said Intermark’s Chief Creative Officer Keith Otter. “With multiple Super Bowl commercials under his belt, Craig was the perfect match for us to elevate the Physicians Mutual brand,” Otter added. The spots also feature a new company jingle composed by music house Shindig Music + Sound.

Josh Simpson, chief strategy officer at Intermark Group, said, “Our research¹ showed that using humor in our campaign would break through to audiences aged 50+, and would also bolster competence and confidence of the deliverer, which is not typical for advertising in the Medicare Supplement insurance category.”

The commercials air nationally — featuring a launch on TBS’s March Madness coverage. The spots will also appear on the company’s social media and digital platforms.

About Physicians Mutual

Physicians Mutual Insurance Company and Physicians Life Insurance Company are members of the Physicians Mutual family. Physicians Mutual Insurance Company offers reliable Medicare Supplement, dental and supplemental health insurance. Physicians Life Insurance Company provides important life insurance coverage and annuities. They entered the funeral preplanning market to help meet the growing needs of funeral home owners and the families they serve. The companies have more than \$3.8 billion in assets and consistently maintain some of the highest financial strength ratings in the nation from independent insurance analysts, including A.M. Best Company and Weiss Ratings. Founded in 1902, Physicians Mutual is headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska. To learn more about the company, please visit physiciansmutual.com.

About Intermark Group

Intermark Group shapes brand success by applying persuasive psychology to group imagination. We unite media, digital analytics, public relations, mobile, social, promotion, event marketing, CRM, in-house production and interactive to shape brands for the modern marketplace. We create through the lens of psychological influence. It’s the underpinning behind all our work. Intermark Group is based in Birmingham, Alabama. For more information, visit intermarkgroup.com

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¹ Bitterly, T. B., Brooks, A. W., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2016, November 10). Risky Business: When Humor Increases and Decreases Status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Advance online publication, and Nielsen Global Trust in Advertising Survey, Q1 2015 and Q1 2013.