

Life Insurance & Financial Services Briefs

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Heart disease and cancer remain the two most prevalent causes of death in **Massachusetts**, accounting for 51 percent of all deaths in 2001, state public health officials said. The latest data also indicates deaths by poisoning, including drug overdoses, were up 22 percent from 2000 to 2001, a national trend that is attracting researchers. Overall, Massachusetts, death rate is 4 percent lower than the national average, and fewer Bay State residents are dying from heart disease, cancer, strokes, influenza and pneumonia. State public health chief Christine Ferguson said “great progress” is tempered by the fact that nearly half of the 56,733 deaths reported in 2001 were preventable and more than a third were linked to poor diet, lack of physical activity and cigarette smoking. The life expectancy of a baby girl born in 2001 is 81 years. For baby boys born that year, it,s 76 years. The report is at: www.state.ma.us/dph/bhsre/resep/resep.htm#death.

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Bank One Corp. has agreed to buy about half of **Zurich Financial Services AG's** U.S. life insurance and annuity operation Zurich Life for \$500 million.

Zurich Financial said it would retain some specialty life insurance assets of Zurich Life, including Kemper Investors Life Insurance Co. It valued the assets it would retain at \$500 million.

Chicago-based Bank One, the sixth-largest U.S. bank, said it expected the acquisition to close in the third quarter of this year and would add 4 cents a share to earnings in 2004.

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As many as four out of 10 individuals who apply for long-term care insurance may be declined due to health reasons, according to a report in the June 2003 edition of **Long-Term Care Insurance Sales Strategies** magazine. The number of declined individuals ranged from one in 10 for ages below 50 to as high as four in 10 (39.7%) for those over 80. “Nationally, about one in five individuals who take the time to apply for long-term care insurance protection is declined due to health reasons,” states Jesse Slome, president of Sales Creators, Inc. The percentage of declined applications increased as applicants aged. The percentage of applicants declined for ages 50-to-59 was 15.4 percent. For ages 70-to-79 it rose to 27.6 percent. □