

their trips with more confidence than when they took themselves in debt should they lose their job. Mark Cipolletti, vice-president of communications at the insurer, noted: "With the improvements to Cancel Anytime's coverage for job loss, Access America continues its tradition of providing coverage that's relevant to the American traveller. It's understandable that even financially secure families and individuals might fear the unexpected in this economic environment, but with Cancel Anytime, there's little reason to postpone booking a vacation." The cover requires that the insured must have at least one year of continuous employment with the same employer and that the termination must be due to the economic situation. Other unforeseen cancellations will be reimbursed at a rate of 80 per cent cash back, including job loss insurance for those who have not yet been in their current position for a year.

## New Dubai assistance office

CONNEX Assistance Middle East has announced the launch of a new branch office in the commercial area of Al-Qusais in Dubai. The business unit has been developed as a response to the company's growing demands by clients to handle larger volumes of cases in the UAE and will act as a regional hub for all activity in the Gulf.

Lara Helmi, international network director, explained: "It is of strategic importance for us to gain a solid foothold in the Gulf, and the expansion of our Dubai team and facilities is critical to ensuring the highest standard of service is continued in all our activities." She added: "Having a team on the ground with over a decade of experience will allow us to fill the gap for full-service assistance that is highly responsive, efficient and cost effective." The new centre will accommodate a state-of-the-art alarm centre, company executives and medical consultants.

should be. The new policy covers 2009, and three follow-up visits to emergency care." Results from the Canadian Tourist Commission revealed that tourist spending in Canada reached \$70.8 billion in 2007, and foreign residents made 17.8 million trips in the same year. Although the figures for 2009 are slightly lower, Devanand Prasad, claims manager for TIC, said that this doesn't change the fact that vast quantities of people are still visiting the country that need to be covered in case of medical emergency. He said: "Every year we see a number of visitors to Canada who end up needing emergency medical care during their stay. Some of the more routine occurrences are the cases of minor food poisonings, broken bones due to common accidents, and unexpected heart attacks or strokes."

The new product will also cover seniors up to the age of 69, will have no maximum number of family members in the family coverage plan, and will be especially beneficial to those visitors staying in Canada for longer than the average tourist. One such British mother's three-month plan from TIC covered her \$12,289 medical expenses when she had to undergo emergency bowel surgery whilst staying with her daughter for a few months in Ontario.

## WTH alters cover



Brad Tolkin WTH

US-based World Travel Holdings (WTH) has announced it is to enhance its travel insurance policies so that consumers booking various types of travel can cancel their holiday for reasons including job loss or furlough with a full refund. The addition to the policies was made after the company saw a positive response to the February launch of Cruise Assurance, a job loss cancellation policy rolled out by CruiseOne and Cruises Inc, WTH's cruise division.

Brad Tolkin, co-chairman and co-CEO of WTH, said: "It is imperative that travel providers continue revamping their insurance programmes so that as we ride out this economic storm, consumers can enjoy their right to book a vacation with peace of mind. After rolling out Cruise Assurance, we saw an immediate uptick in consumer confidence, realising bookings from those who were on the fence."

## FirstAssist wins ONE

FirstAssist Insurance Services has won the contract to provide ONE Underwriting, part of the ONE Group, with travel insurance products and underwriting, including their insurewith ease and OUL Direct brands. Travel is a core part of the FirstAssist business and its comprehensive range of covers includes online medical screening, independent traveller, impaired life cover and scheduled airline failure insurance (SAFI). Chief executive officer of the ONE Group Paul Byrne

rated FirstAssist's ability to tailor a flexible solution to meet his company's needs as 'second to none'. Alistair Hardie, managing director of speciality insurance at FirstAssist, commented: "We are delighted to have been chosen to support ONE Underwriting, and we look forward to building a highly successful partnership with them. This contract is a big win for us and ... further strengthens our position in this key sector."

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