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Press Release

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PHOENIX CENTER'S EXPANDED ANALYSIS AGAIN SHOWS INTERNET USE CUTS DEPRESSION AMONG SENIOR CITIZENS

Increasing Internet Use Among Older Americans Could Reduce U.S. Health Costs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a new study released today entitled *Revisiting Internet Use and Depression Among the Elderly*, the Phoenix Center again finds that spending time online significantly reduces depression for senior citizens. Updating its prior groundbreaking research on the topic by expanding the dataset and applying statistical methods that assess depression and Internet use over time, the Phoenix Center finds that Internet use reduces depression by 34%, a result slightly larger than the 20-28% reduction found when the Center released its original findings in 2009. The study employs a large dataset provided by the Health and Retirement Study of the University of Michigan, and the study carefully evaluates and provides supporting evidence for the causal nature of the relationship.

“The Phoenix Center’s work in this area continues to be the most advanced statistical analysis on the social impacts of broadband to date, and the most believable” said Phoenix Center President Lawrence J. Spiwak. “If policymakers want better data analysis, they now have it. This new study again raises the bar for credible statistical analysis when formulating broadband policy.”

“As before, our research indicates that expanded broadband use by older Americans has benefits,” says study author Phoenix Center Chief Economist Dr. George S. Ford. “The positive mental health consequences of Internet use demonstrate, in part, the value of demand stimulus programs aimed at older Americans, and such benefits should be part of a more thorough cost-benefit analysis of such efforts.”

PHOENIX CENTER POLICY PERSPECTIVE NO. 13-02: *Revisiting Internet Use and Depression Among the Elderly*, may be downloaded free from the Phoenix Center’s web page at: <http://www.phoenix-center.org/perspectives/Perspective13-02Final.pdf>.

The Phoenix Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that studies broad public-policy issues related to governance, social and economic conditions, with a particular emphasis on the law and economics of telecommunications and high-tech industries.

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