Moody's Affirms Northwestern Mutual's Highest Possible Financial Strength Rating

New Report Highlights Company's "Exceptional Business and Financial Profile Strengths," Including Its "Robust and Resilient Balance Sheet"

MILWAUKEE, Sept. 17, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Moody's Investors Service affirmed Northwestern Mutual's Aaa insurance financial strength rating, with a stable outlook, highlighting Northwestern Mutual's exceptional "leading position and strong franchise in its core market," the benefits of its mutual ownership structure, highly productive distribution network, and its overall financial strength.

"The consistent strength of our ratings — the highest possible awarded to any U.S. life insurer — reflects our commitment to sound business and financial management fundamentals that allow us to deliver on the financial security we promise our clients," said Todd Jones, vice president and controller. "We will continue to earn the trust of our policyowners through exceptional product value and diligent risk management."

Moody's expects the Company's "extremely strong" capital adequacy to remain strong, even in an adverse economic environment.

Ratings rationale – key details
The Moody's report called out the following details supporting Northwestern Mutual's financial strength rating:

Productive Field Force: Drivers of business strength include a "highly productive distribution network" characterized by a "high level of retention."
Core Market: A "significant focus on participating whole life insurance" sets the company apart.
Strong Fundamentals: Financial strengths include "strong operating fundamentals reflected by excellent persistency and favorable mortality experience" as well as a "robust and resilient balance sheet characterized by consistent investment performance and solid capital adequacy."
Mutual Structure: The Company's mutual ownership structure "aligns the interests of all stakeholders — policyholders, creditors, and company — leading to superior financial strength."

Industry-leading financial strength ratings
The reaffirmation by Moody's comes on the heels of recent reaffirmations of the Company's ratings in August by both S&P Global Ratings and Fitch Ratings.

At that time, Fitch cited the Company's "successful distribution system, large and stable block of traditional life insurance, and low expense structure relative to peers as key competitive advantages." In its report, S&P called out the Company's "highly effective distribution system" and "strong operating performance (pre-dividend) that allows it to distribute a meaningful amount of dividends to policyholders."

With these latest affirmations, Northwestern Mutual continues to have the highest financial strength ratings awarded to any U.S. life insurer by all four of the major rating agencies: AM Best Company, A++ (highest), April 2019; Fitch Ratings, AAA (highest), August 2019; Moody's Investors Service, Aaa (highest), September 2019; and S&P Global Ratings, AA+ (second highest), August 2019. Third-party ratings are subject to change.

Ratings are for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company and Northwestern Long Term Care Insurance Company.

For more information, see the Our Commitment to Financial Strength page on northwesternmutual.com.

About Northwestern Mutual
Northwestern Mutual has been helping families and businesses achieve financial security for more than 160 years. Through a distinctive, whole-picture planning approach, we empower our clients to make the most of every single day and plan for important moments in their future. We combine the expertise of our financial professionals with a personalized digital experience to help our clients navigate their financial lives every day. With $272.2 billion in assets, $28.5 billion in revenues, and $1.8 trillion worth of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual delivers financial security to more than 4.5 million people who rely on us for life, disability income and long-term care insurance, annuities, and brokerage and advisory services. The company manages nearly $150 billion of investments owned by our clients and held or managed through our wealth management and investment services businesses. Northwestern Mutual ranks 111 on the 2019 FORTUNE 500 and is recognized by FORTUNE® as one of the "World's Most Admired" life insurance companies in 2019.

Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company (NM),Milwaukee, WI (life

and disability insurance, annuities, and life insurance with long-term care benefits) and its subsidiaries. Northwestern Mutual and its subsidiaries offer a comprehensive approach to financial security solutions including: life insurance, long-term care insurance, disability income insurance, annuities, life insurance with long-term care benefits, investment products, and advisory products and services. Subsidiaries include Northwestern Mutual Investment Services, LLC (NMIS) (securities), broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, member FINRA and SIPC; the Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Company® (NMWMC) (fiduciary and fee-based financial planning services), federal savings bank; and Northwestern Long Term Care Insurance Company (NLTC) (long-term care insurance).

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