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Texas House of Representatives Candidate Mike Anderson and Long Term Care Leaders Discuss the Need for Medicaid Reform, New Ideas to Maintain Quality Long Term Care in Texas

In Tour and Briefing at Heritage Place Nursing Home, Anderson Shares His Ideas for Strengthening Long Term Care and Health Care in Texas and Nationally

Mesquite, TX (February 2, 2008) – In a long term care educational briefing today at Heritage Place nursing home, front-line caregivers, elderly residents and their family members met with Texas House of Representatives candidate Mike Anderson (R-Mesquite) and warned that without greater attention on long term care and lasting improvements to Texas' Medicaid program, the state will continue to fall behind the nation in delivering quality senior care.

During the briefing, Heritage Place caregivers stressed that increased investment in Texas' Medicaid program is urgently needed to protect facility residents, strengthen staffing efforts and enhance ongoing quality improvement efforts. According to recent data, Texas' Medicaid reimbursement rates for nursing homes have slipped to 49th in the nation. Additionally, Texas seniors receive \$106.59 on average per patient per day, while the national daily average is \$153.83 per patient. In light of these findings, Heritage Place hosted Anderson as part of a series of briefings with state political candidates to examine how to improve Texas's standing in delivering quality long term care.

“As we look to solve Texas' health care problems and strive to deliver the highest-quality care for all of our residents, we must place special attention on the needs of our older citizens – particularly as Texans continue to live longer and require special care services,” said Anderson. “I am pleased to be able to meet with caregivers on the front-line, like at Heritage Place, to come up with new solutions for improving care for Texans at every stage of life.”

Heritage Place caregivers pointed out that a dialogue on Texas' long term care status is needed to make the issue a broader part of the state and national health care policy debate. At the national level, the National Commission for Quality Long Term Care, headed by former U.S. Senator Bob Kerrey (D-NE) and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA), recently found that most Americans do not understand the nature of long term care funding – with 34 percent believing that most long term care is paid for by Medicare, 20 percent thinking it is paid for by Medicaid, 22 percent believing that individuals and their families pay for most long term care and 13 percent saying they do not know at all how long term care is financed.

“It is important that all Texans – and all Americans – understand the need to maintain high quality care for all citizens in need of its services,” said Heritage Place administrator Loretta Roberts. “We as caregivers are ready to be part of meaningful, patient-focused solutions and thankful to have this unique opportunity to provide a first-hand view to our state’s political candidates on the impact legislative actions in Austin have on constituents at home.”

Roberts noted that Rep. Thomas Latham (R-Sunnyvale), the incumbent for the Texas House of Representatives seat that Anderson is seeking, will also be meeting with Heritage Place caregivers and residents later in February – and that neither visit constitutes a political endorsement, but rather is an effort to help Texas’ office-seekers better understand the plight of their most vulnerable local citizens in long term care.

Anderson, a former Mesquite City Council member and the second-longest tenured mayor of Mesquite, is campaigning for the 101st District seat including Balch Springs, Mesquite and Sunnyvale; Anderson and Rep. Latham will appear on the ballot in the Republican primary on March 4. For more information on Anderson and his platform, visit www.mikeandersoncampaign.com.

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Located in Mesquite, Texas, Heritage Place is a 148-bed nursing home.

MISSION STATEMENT

At Heritage Place of Mesquite, our mission is to deliver quality skilled nursing and rehabilitation services to the members of our community when they need our help. We strive to provide these services in a warm and respectful environment day in and day out. We pride ourselves on the dedication of our professional staff. Our success is measured by the satisfaction of our residents and families and our reputation in Mesquite.