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San Angelo Eldercare Leaders Thank Rep. Drew Darby for Fighting to Strengthen Texas Medicaid Program

State's Rank as 49th in the Nation in Medicaid Funding Undermines Most Vulnerable Local Residents' Long Term Care Needs

San Angelo, TX (July 24, 2008) – In thanking State Representative Drew Darby (R-72) for touring Trisun Care Center Regency House nursing home and meeting with residents and staff, local long term care leaders said it is critical for lawmakers, caregivers and others to sustain an ongoing discussion about how to strengthen Texas seniors' access to quality nursing home care, and to improve Texas' current status of 49th in the nation in Medicaid funding for long term care delivery.

"We thank Rep. Darby for joining us today to meet with our residents, family members and caregiving staff to discuss first-hand how we can work together to improve our state's ranking when it comes to more adequately meeting the growing long term care needs of the San Angelo area's most vulnerable seniors," said Charlene Turner, administrator of Trisun Care Center Regency House.

According to a recent study of the nation's Medicaid program, Texas seniors receive only \$106.59 on average per patient per day, while the national daily average is \$153.83 per patient. Charlene Turner explained that this difference, over time, can make a major impact in patient care programs and services. Even on a regional basis, Charlene Turner explained, Texas is falling behind: New Mexico ranks 30th nationally, at \$137.24; Oklahoma ranks 44th, at \$116.84; Arkansas ranks 47th, at \$111.76; and Louisiana ranks 45th, at \$115.00. (*Source: BDO Seidman/mult.*)

"As we work together to deliver highest-quality care for all of our citizens, our oldest and most vulnerable residents need and deserve access to quality nursing home care – and improving our state's Medicaid standing will significantly impact whether we achieve this access to care," said Rep. Darby. "I am pleased to meet with caregivers on the front line to discuss ideas for improving long term care, and I am proud to be able to champion in the State House the care needs of Texas' frail and elderly."

Charlene Turner noted that Rep. Darby's visit does not constitute 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.

"Many citizens, including many of our policymakers in Austin, do not fully realize the dire funding situation facing our facility, and facilities across Texas," Charlene Turner said. "We thank Rep. Darby for taking the time to visit our facility first hand, and to see the dedication and commitment to care excellence from our management and staff. We look forward to continuing working with Rep. Darby to ensure every senior in our district receives the quality care they need, when they need it."

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About Trisun Care Center Regency House

Located in San Angelo, Texas, Trisun Care Center Regency House is a 120-bed facility providing long-term care in a warm and caring setting. Regency House features individualized medical rehabilitation, with an emphasis on total care, focusing on physical, emotional and spiritual health and well-being.