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**Texas State Sen. Seliger and Rep. Chisum Tour
Skilled Nursing Facilities in Amarillo and Claude
Met with Caregivers and Elderly Residents
to Discuss Long Term Care Issues Impacting Local Seniors**

Texas Ranks 49th in the Nation in Medicaid Reimbursement; Vivian's Nursing Home and Palo Duro Nursing Center Caregivers Ask Sen. Seliger and Rep. Chisum to Help Strengthen and Protect Texas' Strained Long Term Care System

Amarillo and Claude, TX (August 11, 2008) – In facility tours and briefings today with State Senator Kel Seliger (R-Dist. 31) at Vivian's Nursing Center in Amarillo and Rep. Warren Chisum (R- Dist 88) at Palo Duro Nursing Center in Claude, TX, front-line caregivers explained to their elected officials that adequate funding of the state's Medicaid rate is critical to providing quality care for Texas elderly, as the Texas' Medicaid rates for nursing homes ranks 49th in the nation.

According to recent Medicaid data, Texas seniors receive only \$106.59 on average per patient per day, while the national daily average is \$153.83 per patient. Caregivers explained that this difference, over time, can make a major impact in patient care programs and services.

"We appreciate Sen. Seliger's joining us today to meet our residents and staff, and to see first-hand how we can work together to improve Texas' standing in delivering quality long term care," said Linda Littlefield, Administrator for Vivian's Nursing Home in Amarillo. "Many citizens, including many of our policymakers in Austin, do not fully realize the dire funding situation facing long term care here in Texas and we hope to work with our state's political representatives to create additional care improvements and greater long-term security for our patients."

"Rural nursing homes, like Palo Duro, serve a critical role in providing access to high quality long term care for elderly citizens in the area," noted Jami Conrad, Administrator for Palo Duro Nursing Center in Claude, TX. "Without Palo Duro, our elderly residents and their family members who visit them would have to drive miles and miles from here. We provide access to the long term care needs of frail seniors in our community."

“I am thankful for the opportunity to meet with local nursing home residents, their family members and caregivers and to discuss how we can work together to help improve long term care for Texas’ seniors,” said Sen. Seliger. “With Texas’ current low ranking in Medicaid, now is a particularly important time for us to collaborate on new solutions to protect senior care.”

“I appreciate the first-hand look at patient care at Palo Duro Nursing Center and I applaud the dedication of our long term caregivers,” said Rep. Chisum. “With the growing numbers of baby boomers moving into the long term care system, it is critical that we work toward sound public policy that addresses both quality of care and adequate funding. Texas seniors deserve nothing less.”

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