



**For Immediate Release**  
October 6, 2008

**Contact:** Tim Graves, Texas Health Care Association  
(512) 458-1257, [tgraves@txhca.org](mailto:tgraves@txhca.org)  
Rebecca Reid, Texas Health Care Association  
(410) 212 3843 [rreid@txhca.org](mailto:rreid@txhca.org)

## **THCA Praises District 32 Candidates Garcia and Hunter for Addressing Medicaid Funding Crisis**

*Incumbent Rep. Juan Garcia Says Adequate Nursing Home Funding Must be Key Priority in 2009 Legislative Session*

**Austin, TX** -- The Texas Health Care Association (THCA) today praised District 32 incumbent Rep. Juan Garcia and challenger Todd Hunter for agreeing at a Corpus Christi-area long term care forum last week that adequate funding for Texas seniors' nursing home care deserves to be a focus of the 2009 legislative session, and that resolving Texas' status as 49<sup>th</sup> nationally in Medicaid funding must be a priority.

The nonpartisan forum, sponsored by Harden Healthcare, a long term care provider, was held at the Pavillion Assisted Living Center in Portland, TX.

"I am thankful for the opportunity to meet with local nursing home residents, their family members and nursing staff to discuss how we can work together to help improve long term care for Texas' seniors," stated Rep. Juan Garcia. "This is the Greatest Generation, they've lived through a depression, won a world war -- they deserve better. They don't deserve to be 49<sup>th</sup>. We must make nursing home funding a priority in the upcoming legislative session."

Todd Hunter, his GOP challenger, said, "The forum was a great opportunity to listen to the voters of District 32 on issues related to health care, nursing and senior citizens. These issues are important concerns that need to be addressed by the Texas Legislature. And I promise that I will use my experience and seniority to try and work with the health care professionals and senior advocates to reach these goals."

Tim Graves, President of the Texas Health Care Association (THCA), praised both candidates for making the effort to appear at the issues forum and stated, "Now more than ever, we need to have an earnest, serious and realistic discussion about how to strengthen our Texas Medicaid program – in which our Medicaid reimbursement rates have slipped to 49<sup>th</sup> in the entire nation. This rate simply does not reflect the challenges faced daily by our state's most vulnerable seniors and the providers who care for them.

One of the obvious reasons the existing Medicaid rate is not getting the job done, he said, is because the rate itself is lower than that which the State of Texas itself says is necessary to sustain the provision of

- More -

quality care.

“This is an unfortunate situation we intend to discuss with greater and greater frequency during this 2008 election season, and prior to the new legislative session in January, 2009,” Graves concluded.

# # #

*Founded in 1950, the Texas Health Care Association (THCA) is the largest long term care association in Texas. THCA represents a broad spectrum of long-term care providers and professionals offering long term, rehabilitative and specialized health care services. Member facilities, owned by both for-profit and non-profit entities, include nursing facilities, specialized rehabilitation facilities, and assisted living facilities.*