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THCA: Fort Worth Nursing Home Quality Summit Underscores Importance of Sustaining Progress

Texas Long Term Care Leader Emphasizes Key Link Between Adequate Funding, Quality Improvement

Austin, TX (November 27, 2007) – In praising the two-day gathering of long term care advocates from around the country meeting in Fort Worth this week to discuss the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes program as well as the status of nursing home quality initiatives underway nationally, the President of the Texas Health Care Association (THCA) emphasized that successfully sustaining quality improvement involves both improving the collaborative process between providers and regulators as well as always recognizing the key link between adequate, stable funding and improved quality.

“Continuing to improve the quality of care in Texas nursing homes will necessarily involve a broader, deepening partnership between provider, consumer and regulator alike -- and we commend the more than 200 quality improvement organizations, provider representatives, consumers, ombudsmen, government officials, and others attending this important gathering in Fort Worth this week to do just that,” stated Tim Graves, President of THCA.

“In assessing how we move forward together, we also emphasize the fact that there is and always will be a direct correlation between quality improvements and adequate, stable levels of government funding, and we intend to make that case in 2008 and 2009 as important health care funding policy matters are debated in Austin and Washington.”

In praising the Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes program -- a voluntary campaign that monitors key indicators of nursing home care quality in more than 6,200 nursing homes nationwide -- Graves noted that Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) play a vital role in long term care, and said ongoing partnerships between the QIOs and individual nursing homes in Texas and other states is helping to improve quality.

The THCA President also observed that in testimony earlier this month in Washington before the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, long term care advocates made the case that, increasingly, there are a variety of new ways to measure quality improvements in nursing homes, and that this benefits both consumers as well as providers.

“We are proud that long term care providers have helped lead the healthcare sector in transparency and publicly reporting on quality,” Graves continued. “We especially recognize consumer satisfaction is integral to quality facility care, which is one reason why we encourage facilities to conduct satisfaction surveys of patients, family members and staff. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to ensure consumers always have the best information upon which to make an important life decision for themselves or a loved one.”

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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.