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Texas Health Care Association President Tim Graves Comments on Governor Perry's State of the State Address

Austin, TX – The following is the text of a statement by Texas Health Care Association (THCA) President Tim Graves commenting on Governor Rick Perry's State of the State address:

“As we have previously noted and acknowledged, THCA is fully cognizant of the fact Texas must balance its budget, and, as we always have, we will continue to be responsible partners in helping craft a final budget in collaboration with Governor Perry and the Legislature.

“Yet as I will continue to note publicly, if the proposal to cut seniors' nursing facility Medicaid funding by 33 percent is enacted -- as is the case with both SB 1 and HB 1 -- Medicaid nursing home care in Texas as we know it will cease to exist. Further, the cuts will cause bankruptcies and facility closures; cause widespread displacement of fragile nursing home residents; and send skilled, frontline health care workers to unemployment lines in local communities across Texas.

“Rest assured these cuts will severely decrease access to long term care services, particularly nursing home services, and as a consequence will increase the utilization of much higher cost acute care services, including hospital admissions and emergency room visits. There are steep consequences to rate reductions and budget cuts – for patients, for jobs, and indeed, our taxpayers as well.

“Quality care, good local jobs and adequate Medicaid funding from Austin all go hand in hand, and we will continue to work constructively with all parties to preserve, protect and defend seniors' care and local workers' health care jobs.”

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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.