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THCA Commends Rep. Hensarling Appointment to Debt Super Committee, Urges Preservation of Texas Nursing Home Care, Local Jobs in Budget Discussions

*Nursing Home Advocates Point Out Cumulative Impact of Recent Medicare and Medicaid Cuts,
Call for Funding Stability for Continued Provision of Quality Care, Protection of Caregiver Jobs*

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Health Care Association (THCA) today congratulated Representative Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) for his appointment to the new 12-member congressional “super committee” tasked with identifying federal budget savings, and urged Rep. Hensarling and his fellow committee members to preserve quality nursing home care services and caregiver jobs as they strive to address Medicare and Medicaid funding issues.

“We are pleased to see our state’s own Rep. Hensarling join this select task force responsible for generating much-needed savings for our nation, and we are optimistic that the committee will be able to generate sound, bipartisan ideas for lowering the deficit,” said Tim Graves, President of THCA. “As they work together to address this monumental challenge, we ask that the committee members preserve quality nursing home care for seniors in Texas and nationwide by sparing this sector of care from additional funding cuts.”

Graves pointed out that Texas’ nursing home care, in particular, continues to grapple with a significant Medicare-Medicaid funding squeeze that threatens the sustained provision of quality care in many local communities. These funding challenges include Medicaid nursing home cuts of \$58 million enacted in 2011, on top of federal Medicare cuts of \$1.5 billion over ten years implemented as part of health care reform. Recent CMS actions have reduced Medicare nursing home funding in Texas by \$234 million – a 10.4% rate reduction for 2012. In addition, nursing homes are seeing rising costs of care as residents are presenting more complex and acute care needs.

“On behalf of our seniors and their dedicated caregivers, we want to ensure Rep. Hensarling and all the super committee members are aware of the vital need for stable nursing home care funding here in Texas and nationally – and the negative impact that additional cuts would have on quality care programs, front-line caregiver jobs, and local economies here in our state,” added Graves. “We hope to be a resource for the committee members in discussing Texas’ current nursing home care funding environment, and to offer up practical solutions for continuing to enhance seniors’ care in an efficient and cost-effective manner.”

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