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**THCA Praises State, Local Officials for Initial Efforts to Protect Seniors in  
Wake of Hurricane Ike;  
Urges Leaders to Keep Priority on Assisting Frail and  
Elderly Texans in Days Ahead**

**Austin, TX** – In written testimony provided at a joint hearing of the Senate Finance and Senate Health and Human Services Committees on Tuesday, September 16, the Texas Health Care Association (THCA) praised the efforts of state and local officials as they work with the long term care community to protect the care needs of vulnerable seniors on the Gulf coast in the wake of Hurricane Ike and urged them to keep frail, elderly Texans a priority as workers restore critical services.

“We appreciate the work of all state and local officials that have helped with the response,” stated Tim Graves, President of THCA. “We have a long road ahead as we continue to deal with power outage and other recovery issues – but so far we are holding steady and thank you for your help to date and in the future.”

Continued Graves, “I am glad to report that the long term care community has dealt successfully with numerous evacuations and continues to care for thousands of patients affected by the situation.”

Over the past several days, Graves said, locally-impacted nursing homes and their staffs have participated in a strong, organized effort to help coordinate the demand for emergency assistance – and member facilities have responded with help, across the full spectrum of long term care needs. It is essential, he added, that the frailty of nursing home residents and their unique health care needs continue to hold priority status in the efforts to repair infrastructures and normalize vital services.

“Besides the first responders, many individual caregivers are the heroes who deserve praise,” Graves continued. “As they always do, they have gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure frail, elderly, and disabled Texans– and their families – are safe, and continue to receive the quality care and compassion they need during this difficult recovery period.”

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