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New Texas Poll: Republicans, Democrats, Independents Alike Strongly Oppose State Cuts to Seniors' Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing Care

THCA Releases New Baseline Associates Data Finding 79% of Texans Oppose New \$25.6 Million Funding Cut; 62% Less Likely to Vote for Their State Legislator if They Voted for Eldercare Cuts

Austin, TX – As state leaders intend to put into effect on September 1, 2010 new cuts of \$25.6 million to Texas seniors' rehabilitation and skilled nursing care – and warn further cuts may occur in the 2011-2013 Biennium -- the Texas Health Care Association (THCA) released new data finding a full 79% of Texans oppose this action, and that 62% would be less likely to vote for their state legislator if they voted for the cut. The poll, conducted by Baseline & Associates (752 RV's; 7/12-15; 3.5% MoE), also found 70% of Republicans, 80% of Independents and 88% of Democrats oppose the planned eldercare funding cuts.

"This new data is a powerful wake-up call to elected officials at every level of Texas state government that the new \$25.6 million cut to Texas seniors' rehabilitation and skilled nursing care are enormously unpopular, and that local lawmakers who vote for cuts will have a difficult task explaining their action to local seniors," said Tim Graves, President of THCA. "With Washington making deep cuts to Medicare -- and Texas leaders looking to cut seniors' Medicaid benefits still further -- we will be very active in the months ahead explaining how these cumulative cuts undermine seniors' care, wreak havoc on facilities' staffing stability, and jeopardize good local jobs that are a mainstay to rural communities across the state."

The following are the poll results and questions:

As you may know Texas is facing a state budget deficit for the upcoming year. In order to help balance the budget, state leaders have proposed cutting Medicaid over \$25 million for seniors' rehabilitation and skilled nursing care. Do you favor or oppose these proposed funding cuts to rehabilitation and skilled nursing care?

6%	Favor Strongly
9%	Favor Somewhat
15%	TOTAL FAVOR
16%	Oppose Somewhat
63%	Oppose Strongly
79%	TOTAL OPPOSE
6%	Depends/Unsure/Refused

If your state legislator voted for these state cuts to rehabilitation and skilled nursing care, would that make you more likely or less likely to vote for your state legislator?

10%	More likely/strongly
10%	More likely/somewhat
20%	TOTAL MORE LIKELY
18%	Less likely/somewhat
44%	Less likely/strongly
62%	TOTAL LESS LIKELY
11%	No difference/Unsure/Refused

The THCA leader said the ongoing debate surrounding Texas' eldercare funding policies is significant and instructive because it will help spotlight how cuts will inhibit facilities' continued investment in cost effective care, and illogically weaken local facilities' ability to send growing numbers of seniors home following stays for convalescent and rehabilitative care.

"Any constraint on access to long term care will have the effect of increasing the utilization of much higher cost acute care services, including hospital admissions and emergency room visits," Graves continued. "It is a classic example of being penny wise and pound foolish." Graves concluded.

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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.