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Texas Health Care Association Commends U.S. House for Passing Critical “FMAP Legislation” That Provides Federal Medicaid Matching Funds for State’s Neediest and Most Vulnerable Populations

THCA Appreciates Passage of Bill to Provide \$1.7 Billion in Emergency Funding to Texas; Urges Prioritization of Funding to Protect State’s Neediest and Sickest Seniors Following Recent Medicare, Medicaid Cuts

AUSTIN, TX (August 10, 2010) – The Texas Health Care Association (THCA) commended the U.S. House of Representatives for passing a six-month extension to the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) today. In a vote of 247 to 161, the House approved the \$26 billion in financial aid for states, which will deliver \$1.7 billion in necessary funding assistance to Texas. In addition to commending the action, THCA leaders urged state lawmakers to ensure that top priority in the emergency funding is given to the state’s vulnerable seniors who rely on Medicaid funding for essential nursing home care.

“We are extremely pleased by the House’s decision to support this temporary FMAP increase, which is critical to maintaining Texas seniors’ access to the quality skilled nursing care they require and deserve,” said Tim Graves, President of THCA. “Now, we must work with our lawmakers to ensure that these much-needed funds are allocated appropriately, and that vital funding for seniors’ nursing home care is made a priority, especially following recently announcement Medicaid cutbacks of more than \$25 million for nursing home care in Texas.”

Included as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) in an effort to protect vulnerable populations in the midst of the nation’s deep recession, the new extension of FMAP through June 30, 2011 will help augment funding for Texas’ schools and the state’s strained Medicaid program, which *thousands of our state’s poorest* seniors rely on for maintained access to quality round-the-clock nursing home and rehabilitative care.

“This funding does not come a day too soon, as Texas nursing homes are grappling with a major funding squeeze that includes recent federal Medicare cuts of nearly \$27 billion over the next 10 years, as well as proposed state-level cuts to Medicaid – which is already falling short of meeting the actual costs of care,” said Graves. “The FMAP extension is an all-important safety net that will protect vulnerable Texas seniors, the jobs of front-line staffers providing their care and the local economies served by area facilities.”

Today’s action follows the Senate passage of the legislation, and the bill will now head to President Obama for signing into law.

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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.