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## **Coalition to Protect Senior Care: Caregivers, Congress Share Responsibility for Quality Senior Care**

*National Meeting to Focus on Urgent Need to Prevent Medicare Cuts for Oldest Americans*

**Joplin, MO** – Citing enormous concerns about possibly jeopardizing the care and well being of the nation's most vulnerable citizens, the Coalition to Protect Senior Care today urged Congress to end discussion regarding cuts to Medicare Part A skilled nursing facilities funding, and said an advertising and grass-roots effort this week focuses on how Congress and front-line caregivers have a shared responsibility to protect Medicare funding for senior care.

“This is a key week when it comes to congressional leaders making decisions in regard to health care funding priorities, and we respectfully urge Congress not to cut the very funding we as caregivers and clinicians require to ensure our oldest, most vulnerable seniors receive the high quality care they so clearly deserve,” stated Lisa Cantrell, a co-founder of the National Association of Health Care Assistants (NAHCA), and a national spokesperson for the Coalition to Protect Senior Care.

Cantrell, convening a national meeting of the NAHCA Steering Committee in Joplin, Mo. this week, said coalition members' message to Congress stresses the need to uphold and strengthen care quality standards and invest in finding, training and retaining the key staff responsible for most direct patient care. “We have been pleased with the reception and interest we have received from Members of Congress, and will continue to make the positive point that America's front line caregivers and clinicians have a shared responsibility with our lawmakers to ensure every U.S. senior receives the quality long term care they need and deserve.”

Specifically, Cantrell said that in addition to holding news events in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Tucson, Arizona; and Topeka, Kansas, the Coalition has generated almost ten thousand letters to Members of Congress in the few weeks since the coalition's creation.

She also said the Coalition to Protect Senior Care print advertising now running in Capitol Hill-oriented publications specifically states, “Congress and front-line caregivers have a shared responsibility to protect Medicare funding for senior care. Proposed cuts of \$2.7 billion threaten recent quality improvements and adequate staffing levels in our nation's skilled nursing facilities.”

The Coalition to Protect Senior Care consists of the American Association for Long Term Care Nursing (AALTCN); the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA); the American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordinators (AANAC); the National Rural Health Association (NRHA); The American Association of Nurse Executives (AANEX); the American Occupational Therapy Association; the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA); the American Society of Health Care Administration Executives (ASHCAE); ASHCAE state affiliate members representing Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Texas and Utah; the American Health Care Association (AHCA); the American Health Quality Association (AHQA); the National Association for the Support of Long Term Care (NASL); the National Association of Health Care Assistants (NAHCA); the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care; the Coalition of Women in Long Term Care (COWL); and the Senior Clinician Group.

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