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Coalition to Protect Senior Care Urges House Ways and Means Panel to Reject MedPAC Recommendations on SNF Medicare Funding

National Shortage of Long Term Care Workforce, Economic Recession and Weakened States Budgets Underscore Need for Medicare Update in FY 2010 Budget

Joplin, MO (March 18, 2009) – A national coalition of frontline caregivers today said the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission’s (MedPAC) recommendation urging the House Ways and Means Committee to reject a Medicare cost of living adjustment for skilled nursing facilities in FY 2010 poses major consequences for seniors’ growing care needs, the long term care sector experiencing a national workforce shortage, and a U.S. economy in need of jobs growth.

“On every conceivable level, MedPAC’s recommendation not to grant a Medicare cost of living update to skilled nursing facilities is shortsighted and wrong,” said Lori Porter, co-founder of the National Association of Health Care Assistants and the Coalition to Protect Senior Care. “At a time when Congress and President Obama are proposing economic recovery initiatives to stimulate jobs growth in the long term care sector to help improve patient care and help move our economy forward, the MedPAC policy would do just the opposite.”

Frontline direct care workers in skilled nursing facilities are already challenged with staffing shortages – 110,000 nationwide – and these facilities, particularly in rural communities, are often the largest local employer,” she pointed out.

Said Porter: “Filling those vital long term care positions should be a key component to jumpstarting local economies and preserving the quality of care we deliver to our most frail seniors – especially at a time when states are cutting Medicaid funding and programs, the other primary funding source for skilled nursing care.”

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 (AOTA); the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA); the American Society of Health Care Administration Executives (ASHCAE); 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 Nurse Executive Council.

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