



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Nation's Front Line Caregivers Mobilizing to Help Defeat Obama Implementation of Damaging Medicare Regulation

\$1.05 Billion FY 2010 Proposed Medicare Cut Weakens Key Health Care Delivery System Reforms Now Benefitting Patients, Strengthening Frontline Workforce

Joplin, MO (May 4, 2009) – The Coalition to Protect Senior Care (CPSC) today said it is mobilizing to defeat a Medicare regulation put forward for implementation Friday by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The proposed Medicare rule, a Coalition spokeswoman said, would cut Medicare funding by \$1.05 billion in FY 2010 and \$5.6 billion over five years, eliminate the key front line care jobs that make a positive difference in patient outcomes, and significantly undercut ongoing improvements in clinical infrastructure already underway now benefitting patients.

“With so many good health care reform ideas coming from the new Obama Administration, it is curious and distressing to see a previously-discredited Medicare regulation appear on the policy radar screen,” said Lisa Cantrell, a co-founder of the National Association of Health Care Assistants, and a national spokesperson for the Coalition to Protect Senior Care. “The new CMS directive is enormously frustrating to America’s front line caregivers because its net impact will be to reverse existing federal policy that is currently benefitting elderly patients.”

Cantrell, pointing out that a bipartisan coalition of forty Democratic and Republican U.S. Senators worked last year to derail the same Bush Administration proposal, said that as the nature of America’s skilled nursing facility (SNF) patient population continues to evolve due to demographic and policy changes, the federal government’s role should be to help facilities’ direct care staff treat the high-acuity individuals increasingly seen in facilities nationwide. Moreover, Cantrell warned, the direct care staff that help make the key difference in quality outcomes will also be significantly harmed by the CMS action.

“The Medicare funding cuts illogically put forward will further put at risk a facility’s ability to sustain caregiver wage and benefit packages that are already on the margin of being uncompetitive with other service-oriented professions,” Cantrell warned. “This regulation and its resulting sharp Medicare funding cut is bad news across the board, and it is in need of swift correction based on simple common sense and what is best for patients and caregivers. We urge CMS to reconsider and reverse this new policy, and we will be encouraging Congress to voice its strong, legitimate dissent.”

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 Assessment Coordinators (AANAC) the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA); 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; and the Senior Clinician Group.

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