



Real-world Harm from Governor's Budget Plan

Skilled nursing facility closings, patient transfers, significant job losses

COLUMBUS – (June 25, 2009) – The Skilled Nursing Care Coalition today painted a stark picture of the real-life human consequences of the devastating and debilitating impact the estimated \$300 million reduction in total Medicaid reimbursement being proposed by Governor Strickland would have on the state's frail elderly and disabled Ohioans:

- Dozens of facilities likely will have to close
- Residents in closed facilities will have to be transferred to other locations, causing trauma and life-threatening health risks from being forced out of what is, by need and choice, their home
- More than 2,000 jobs will be lost
- The quality of care that is provided in remaining facilities will decline because there simply will not be enough nurses and other staff to give the around-the-clock care that is needed.

Victoria Gresh, the Executive Director of The Ohio Academy of Nursing Homes, Inc., said, "Under the Governor's proposal, 20% of the skilled nursing facilities in Ohio each will lose half a million dollars or more over the next two years, likely forcing dozens to go out of business. They just won't be able to make it with that big a cut to their revenue."

John Alfano, President and CEO of AOPHA, The Advocate Of Not-For-Profit Services For Older Ohioans, said, "Closing that many skilled nursing facilities is disastrous. Bear in mind the average skilled nursing facility employs over a hundred people – they will be out of jobs. And the patients will have to move."

Pete Van Runkle, executive director of the Ohio Health Care Association, added, "The life-threatening consequences are real. Transfer trauma studies show conclusively that when you take frail, physically and mentally debilitated people, uproot them from the environment and the care to which they're accustomed, and move them to a strange place that may be far away, there are negative outcomes, including death."

-more-

The Coalition urged the joint House-Senate budget conference committee and legislative leaders to reject the Governor's proposed cuts and retain the Senate version of the budget for skilled nursing facilities. The Senate version not only provides appropriate funding for skilled nursing care but also generates \$686 million for other Medicaid services through fees paid by the skilled nursing facilities.

BACKGROUND

The Skilled Nursing Care Coalition is comprised of three associations that represent the continuum of care providers and residents they serve. Those associations are AOPHA (the Advocate Of Not-For-Profit Services For Older Ohioans), the Ohio Health Care Association (OHCA) and The Ohio Academy of Nursing Homes, Inc. (OANH). The Coalition advocates for fair funding for frail seniors who rely on government assistance for their health care needs in whatever setting they choose and in which their needs can be reasonably accommodated. More information is available at: www.caringforohio.org.

###

Contacts:

Skilled Nursing Care Coalition – Wayne Hill (Mobile) 216/408-1211

AOPHA – John Alfano (O) 614/444-2882

The Ohio Academy of Nursing Homes, Inc. – Victoria Gresh (O) 614/461-1922

Ohio Health Care Association – Pete Van Runkle (O) 614/540-1329