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Statement from AAHSA, AHCA and The Alliance on Establishment of the National Commission on Quality Long-term Care

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To: National Desk, Health Reporter

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 12 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Following is a statement from The American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, The American Health Care Association and The Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care, on establishment of the National Commission on Quality Long-term Care:

The nation's three largest aging services organizations are proud to support the creation of the National Commission on Quality Long-term Care, announced today by the National Quality Forum (NQF) as an independent body that will make recommendations on how to improve the quality of long-term care in America. AAHSA, AHCA and The Alliance launched our own voluntary Quality First initiative two years ago, and as part of that initiative, we agreed to support the development of an independent commission as an important step in the drive for accountability in the delivery of quality long-term care. The three organizations believe that the commission will begin to focus national attention on an important public policy issue and, by advancing quality improvement efforts, will help to inspire public confidence in the long-term care system.

The Quality First initiative, launched by the three provider groups in July of 2002, called on long-term care providers to make a voluntary, profession-wide commitment to quality improvement. The national organizations have supported government efforts to create new ways to measure the quality of care in the nation's nursing homes and home health agencies and to disclose the results of that measurement. Moreover, many nursing homes, assisted living facilities, senior housing organizations and home and community-based services providers who participate in Quality First have expanded their quality improvement activities and committed to a new and higher level of accountability to their residents, clients, families, staff and communities.

While AAHSA, AHCA and The Alliance are jointly funding the Commission's activities, the Commission is - by contract - an independent entity. Our hope is that the Commission will take a constructive, pragmatic approach to making recommendations on how to improve long-term care in the United States.

The work of the Commission - coupled with Quality First and the provider community's partnership with the federal government on the Nursing Home and Home Health Quality Initiative - will continue to "raise the bar" on quality improvement for America's frail, elderly and disabled populations.

Aging services providers are making strides in implementing the core principles of Quality First and meeting its six performance outcomes, which are: improvement in compliance with federal regulations; progress in promoting financial integrity and preventing occurrences of fraud; progress in the quality of clinical outcomes and prevention of confirmed abuse and neglect; improvement in all Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) continuous quality improvement measures; improvement in customer satisfaction; and improvement in employee retention and turnover rates.

The American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA) is committed to advancing the vision of healthy, affordable, ethical aging services for America. The association represents 5,600 mission-driven, not-for-profit nursing homes, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living and senior housing

facilities, and community service organizations. Every day, AAHSA's members serve nearly two million older persons across the country. AAHSA's Web site is <http://www.aahsa.org>.

The American Health Care Association (AHCA) is committed to quality and performance excellence in the long term care profession and actively supports Quality First, a covenant for healthy, affordable, and ethical long term care, and adherence to its principles and goals. Nationwide, AHCA represents more than 10,000 non-profit and for-profit facilities that are dedicated to professional and compassionate care for more than one million elderly and disabled individuals daily in nursing facilities, assisted living residences, subacute centers and homes for persons with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. AHCA's Web site is <http://www.ahca.org>.

The Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care is an organization of national skilled nursing providers who deliver care to hundreds of thousands of patients on a daily basis.


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