



For Immediate Release:
February 12, 2009

AHCA Contact: Susan Feeney (202) 898-6333
Alliance Contact: Debra DeShong Reed (202) 528-4214

**AHCA/NCAL/Alliance: Tentative Agreement on Economic Stimulus Legislation
Good for U.S. Seniors**

*\$87 Billion FMAP Funding, Medicaid Rule Delay, Prompt Payment Provision, Delay in
3% Withholding All Benefit Seniors' Care Needs as State Budgets Face Turmoil*

Washington, DC – The American Health Care Association, the National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) and the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care today strongly supported the tentative agreement reached by congressional negotiators regarding the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (S. 1)*, which includes several key provisions important to the nation's most vulnerable seniors and the providers who care for them.

“We commend and thank the Conferees for approving \$87 billion in increased Medicaid funding, which is a cornerstone in terms of protecting seniors’ ongoing care needs as our states cope with the severe economic downturn and the associated budgetary turmoil,” stated Bruce Yarwood, President and CEO of AHCA/NCAL. “With proper state spending safeguards to help ensure these new federal funds are actually directed towards seniors’ care, the FMAP increase will go a long way towards ensuring seniors retain access to quality nursing home care, and protecting and creating the key facility staff jobs that make an enormous difference in patient outcomes.”

Alan G. Rosenbloom, President and CEO of the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care, said Governors and State Legislatures should help ensure the Medicaid funds will be used as intended – for seniors’ health care – and not diverted to other state priorities. “While we are disappointed a provision to prevent FMAP funds from being diverted is not in the bill, the package now before the Congress is excellent news for America’s seniors. We strongly urge state lawmakers to ensure the spirit and intent of the federal stimulus legislation is followed – and that protecting and creating new jobs in our frontline workforce, for the benefit of our neediest seniors, is indeed accomplished.”

The national long term care leaders also said three other provisions in the developing legislation are beneficial to meeting seniors’ ongoing care needs, and preserving the economic stability the long term care sector needs to meet growing demand for care, and to sustain quality improvement efforts. Those provisions are:

- A moratorium that delays six harmful Medicaid rules that would undermine funding to nursing homes. The delay allows Congress and the administration until the end of June to reach a more permanent solution.

- A provision requiring prompt Medicaid payments to nursing facilities and hospitals. Those claims must now be paid in 90 days.
- A one year delay for a provision that would require Federal, state and local government entities to withhold 3 percent of certain payments (including Medicare payments) made to tax-paying entities for services and property.

###