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**National Long Term Care Leaders Praise Senator Snowe's Recognition of Nursing Homes' Unique Funding Challenges in Caring For Nation's Seniors**

*Senator Snowe Expresses Concern About Medicare Reimbursement, State Medicaid Budget Crisis*

**Washington, DC** – Commenting on Maine Senator Olympia Snowe's remarks yesterday recognizing the unique funding challenges faced by the nation's nursing homes in caring for the nation's oldest, most vulnerable citizens, the President and CEO of the American Health Care Association (AHCA), Bruce Yarwood, and the President of the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care, Alan G. Rosenbloom, issued the following joint statement:

“The long term care sector's ongoing concern with deep Medicare cuts, in conjunction with the state Medicaid funding crisis fueled by the recession, was reflected in Senator Snowe's comments on the Senate Finance Committee health care reform package. We thank her for focusing much-needed attention on the unique challenges our sector faces in the continued provision of quality care to the vulnerable patients we serve in Maine and across the nation.

“Senator Snowe's specific mention of the Medicare and Medicaid funding issues central to meeting the needs of our patients and workforce represent her recognition of the fragile economic situation in which nursing homes operate, the billions in Medicare cuts already imposed on nursing home care by the Obama Administration, the cuts state Medicaid programs are making to already inadequate nursing home funding, and the fact Medicare and Medicaid funding cannot be viewed in isolation.

“While the long term care community supports health care reform, we will continue to impress upon lawmakers that because three of every four of our nursing home patients' care is funded by Medicare and Medicaid combined – and because facilities devote a full 70% of operating expenses to wages, benefits and other labor costs – adequate Medicare funding levels for nursing home care as part of health reform is integral to staffing stability and quality care in Maine facilities, as it is nationwide. Senator Snowe has been a consistent champion for the long term care community, and we thank her for her continued fight for stable Medicare funding for seniors in nursing homes as the health care reform debate continues.”