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Media Contacts:

Kristopher Jensen
952-851-7240 (office)
651-253-2659 (cell)
kjensen@tunheim.com

Blois Olson
952-851-7246 (office)
651-276-1678 (cell)
bolson@tunheim.com

Senate Bill Takes Senior Cuts to a Deeper Level *Seniors clearly not a “priority” nor are they “harmless” as budget lines are drawn at the Capitol.*

The Senate Health and Human Services budget proposal makes unsustainable cuts to nursing homes and assisted living programs for Minnesota’s poorest seniors

ST. PAUL – March 23, 2011 – Just days after the House released a painful budget proposal that deeply cut programs for the elderly, the Senate today took the pain to a new level.

The Senate budget slashes funding for nursing homes and home healthcare programs for poor seniors with double digit percentage impacts to many nursing homes.

The senate proposal includes:

- Massive cuts to nursing home rates that average 5.83 percent per nursing home, with some receiving double digit reductions ranging from 10 to 19 percent.
- A 12.7% reduction to the Elderly Waiver program, the state program that helps serve seniors in their homes and avoid nursing home care
- An unfair impact on greater Minnesota nursing homes and jobs

“To say we are disappointed would be an understatement,” said Gayle Kvenvold, president and CEO of Aging Services of Minnesota. “As the health and human services budget proposals have been unveiled, we have gone from bad to worse. Cuts of the magnitude proposed by the Senate will mean that seniors will not have access to the care they need, and the brunt of the cuts will be on Minnesota’s caregivers and will kill jobs in Minnesota. Long-term care supports \$6.7 billion in economic activity and 112,600 jobs in the state. The impacts will be especially felt in rural Minnesota, where care facilities are often among the biggest employers in the community.”

At a time when the state should be focused on economic recovery it is important to consider budget solutions that include more than just cuts.

“We trusted that the promises to our seniors would be kept by the House and Senate budgets, but they weren’t,” said Patti Cullen, president and CEO of Care Providers of Minnesota. “Balancing the budget on the backs of seniors will spell disaster for the state’s most rapidly growing age demographic.”

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About The Long-Term Care Imperative:

The Long-Term Care Imperative is a legislative collaboration between Aging Services of Minnesota and Care Providers of Minnesota, the state’s two long-term care trade associations.