

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC) Urges Legislature to Spare All Seniors from Deep Medi-Cal Cuts**

*Preserving Access to Hospital-Based Skilled-Nursing Care is Critical to State's Most Vulnerable Patients*

**Los Angeles** (August 28, 2013) – As the 2013 legislative session draws to a close, local hospital leaders are urging lawmakers to protect access to hospital-based skilled-nursing care by reversing draconian Medi-Cal cuts. Earlier this month, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) exempted rural hospitals from deep payment cuts and reduced reimbursement rates. Hospital leaders said that seniors throughout California deserve access to the most effective and efficient care, so the exemption should be expanded to include all hospitals.

“It’s time to find a similar resolution for urban skilled-nursing facilities,” said Marty Gallegos, Senior Vice President of Health Policy and Communications for HASC. “Implementation of Medi-Cal cuts for these facilities will have devastating consequences for patients, communities and access to essential medical care.”

Medi-Cal beneficiaries make up nearly 80 percent of the patients receiving hospital-based skilled-nursing care in California. These patients often require specialized or medically complex care that freestanding nursing facilities and other health care providers do not provide. In the last five years, approximately 40 hospital-based skilled-nursing facilities in California (about one-third) have closed due to financial issues.

In Southern California, there is a profound shortage of hospital-based skilled nursing beds. That means virtually no options for medically fragile patients who become displaced because of the Medi-Cal cuts. The limited number of hospitals that provide acute care services in urban areas will be especially impacted at a time when we are working to provide greater access to health care services through the Affordable Care Act.

HASC is part of a statewide bipartisan coalition supporting Assembly Bill (AB) 900, authored by Assemblymember Luis Alejo, (D – Salinas), which represents a partial solution to reverse some of the cuts. The coalition includes labor, business, local government, non-profits and health care leaders including: the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Valley Industry and Commerce Association, Los Angeles Business Federation (BizFed) and the Inland Empire Economic Partnership.

AB 900, which is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense File, may be considered on Friday August 30. The bill has received unanimous bipartisan support. Not a single lawmaker has cast a 'no' vote on the bill during roll calls in both the Assembly and the Senate. "Hopefully, lawmakers, led by Senator Kevin De Leon, will follow suit with the action taken in rural communities and allow this bill to advance to a vote of the full Senate. The upper house can then express their support for continuing the critical skilled-nursing services for patients in urban settings," added Gallegos. AB 900 also protects quality jobs. Cuts to urban skilled-nursing facilities threaten patients and thousands of jobs of highly skilled care givers.

**HASC** is a not-for-profit regional trade association comprised of hospitals and health systems, related professional associations and associate members with a common interest in improving the operating environment for hospitals and improving the health status of the communities they serve. HASC represents 160 hospitals which operate a total of 41,000 beds in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Our mission is to serve the political, economic, informational and educational needs of hospitals in our regions, and improve the quality and accessibility of health care services and thereby improving the health status of communities.

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