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Michele Kent, Leading Age President, CEO Testifies on Medicaid Cuts to Nursing Homes

Princeton, New Jersey – October 4, 2011 On Monday, October 3, 2011, Michele Kent, President, CEO of LeadingAge New Jersey, testified before the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee on Medicaid cuts to nursing homes.

“LeadingAge New Jersey members maintain a mission to serve low-income populations, and a majority of the facilities we represent participate in the Medicaid program, stated Ms. Kent. The proposed Medicaid cut to nursing homes is 3%, and while that number looks small, the cuts total approximately \$80 million when combined with the federal matching dollars that are lost. Many of our members will lose hundreds of thousands of dollars in Medicaid funding, and this will directly impact the care and services they provide.”

These cuts hit even deeper as nursing homes have not received any increase in their reimbursement rates since 2008. Additionally, Medicare funding to nursing homes was recently cut by 11% , adding to already strained resources.

“While no one plans to use the services of a nursing home, many of us and our loved ones will. With the increase in home and community based services and support, people are not entering nursing homes until much later in life. While this is a good thing, it also means that nursing home residents are much older, frailer, and sicker. And that means that their cost of care is higher. We must keep the system well-funded so we can continue to provide the highest quality care to our state’s most vulnerable population, our seniors.”

Michele Kent served under both Governors Whitman and Corzine, worked for the Senate, and led New Jersey’s largest agency, the Department of Human Services, prior to serving as President of LeadingAge New Jersey

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LeadingAge New Jersey is a statewide association representing 145 not-for-profit organizations encompassing the senior services continuum, serving 25,000+ seniors. Providers include Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Residences, Continuing Care Retirement Communities, Residential Health Care Facilities, and Independent Senior Housing Facilities. Members also offer an array of home and community-based programs including Hospice, Adult Day Services, Meals-On-Wheels, Congregate Housing Services, and Intergenerational Child Care.

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