

## Long Term Care Community Praises Senator Gordon Smith for His Leadership, Vision for Long Term Care

by Bend Weekly News Sources

AHCA Points to Smith's Efforts to Stabilize Funding to Sustain Quality Improvements, Co-Sponsor Legislation to Ensure Quality Care Washington, DC- The American Health Care Association (AHCA) and the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL), the nation's largest long term health care association, alongside the Oregon Health Care Association (OHCA), today recognized Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR) for his legislative advocacy on behalf of the millions of the nation's frail, elderly, and disabled, and the men and women who care for them each day. Senators Smith and Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) recently co-sponsored the Long Term Care Quality & Modernization Act, which is being touted widely by long term care health officials as the most comprehensive piece of legislation in recent history. The legislation would totally reform long term care as we know it today.

"Our nation's seniors and caregivers throughout the long term care community owe a debt of gratitude to Senator Gordon Smith for what he has done and for what he is doing to ensure quality care for those who need it most," said Bruce Yarwood, President and CEO of AHCA. "His efforts demonstrate what effective lawmaking in America is all about-not only does he represent his constituents in Oregon and the people of the United States well, but he does so in a bipartisan way that gets results. That's what the citizens of Oregon and the United States want, and that is what they are getting in Senator Gordon Smith." Senator Smith has been outspoken on the importance of economic stability in the nursing home sector in order to meet growing government and consumer demands for quality care. His comments linking economic stability with improved care quality have been echoed by providers and government officials alike; moreover, recent government reports have substantiated those comments and shown measurable progress in key areas of quality care. "Proposed cuts to Medicaid starting in 2007, and potential cuts to Medicare in this Congressional session, threaten these quality improvements," said Yarwood. "Senator Smith has taken the time to truly understand these complex issues, and has stood up for stable funding and the sustained quality improvements we're seeing here in Oregon," remarked Steve Fogg, President of the Oregon Health Care Association (OHCA). Yarwood agreed saying, "The millions of America's frail, elderly, and disabled citizens and their families nationwide -- including more than 15,000 Oregonians being cared for in long term care facilities across the state-truly have a friend in Senator Gordon Smith." The American Health Care Association and the National Center For Assisted Living are the nation's leading long term care organizations. AHCA/NCAL and their membership are committed to performance excellence and Quality First, a covenant for healthy, affordable and ethical long term care. AHCA/NCAL represent nearly 11,000 non-profit and proprietary facilities dedicated to continuous improvement in the delivery of professional and compassionate care provided daily by millions of caring employees to more than 2.5 million of our nation's frail, elderly and disabled citizens who live in nursing facilities, assisted living residences, subacute centers and homes for persons with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. OHCA is the voice of quality long term care in Oregon. The association represents nursing facilities, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities and related professional partners. OHCA promotes high quality care and services through professional development and effective advocacy in the shaping of public and private policy.

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