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**Florida's Nursing Home Diversion Waiver Receives Federal Approval**

*~Waiver allows for coordination care for seniors, progress toward SMMC approvals~*

**Tallahassee, Fla.**—The Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) received waiver approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to continue Florida's Nursing Home Diversion program. The waiver from standard federal requirements allows Florida to continue offering nursing home diversion services in a managed care environment through the upcoming implementation of the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) Long-term Care program.

"Continuing this waiver as the Agency implements the SMMC program gives the necessary flexibility to meet the needs of Florida's growing elder population," said Secretary Liz Dudek. "The Agency looks forward to continual collaboration with the Department of Elder Affairs in the coming year so we can achieve a successful transition from the Nursing Home Diversion program to the Long-term Care program for seniors."

In negotiating approval of the Nursing Home Diversion program waiver extension, the Agency incorporated additional quality standards and requirements for home-like environment and community integration.

"We worked closely with our federal partner to develop these standards to improve the lives of Florida's elder population, and intend to incorporate these enhanced standards in our other home and community based programs going forward," said Medicaid Director Justin Senior.

"The Department applauds the efforts of AHCA in negotiating with the federal government to achieve the waiver renewal," said Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Charles Corley. "We have witnessed the benefits of this program that address long-term care needs in community settings, and we are pleased it will continue and then be integrated with Statewide Medicaid Managed Care."

The Florida Long-term Care Community Diversion Pilot Program, better known as the Nursing Home Diversion program, has been in operation since December 1998. It was designed to provide individuals ages 65 or older who are at risk for nursing home placement with an option to continue living in the community through provision of long-term care services in their homes and coordination of their acute care and long-term care services. It also allows for coverage of nursing facility care when seniors need more supports than a community setting permits. The waiver was Florida's first managed care program designed to integrate acute care and long-term care services for elders eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. The waiver is currently operating in 66 counties and has 21,150 enrolled recipients.



*The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. As the single state Agency that administers Florida's Medicaid program, AHCA is responsible for maintaining the waiver authority and the Department of Elder Affairs, the state's designated agency responsible for serving elders, has day-to-day responsibility for operating the program. For more information about the Nursing Home Diversion program, visit <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/nhd.php>.*

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