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TOPEKA – AARP Rates Kansas in Top Quartile in Long Term Services and Supports

AARP released a report on Thursday that ranks Kansas as number 9 in the nation in terms of long term services and supports. States were evaluated on several factors, including affordability and access, choice of setting and provider, quality of life and quality of care, and support for family caregivers. AARP stated the top quartile, including Kansas, were states in which “public policy decisions made in these states interact with private sector actions, resulting in systems that display higher performance.”

Cindy Luxem, President & CEO of the Kansas Health Care Association, said Thursday that she was very happy to hear that AARP ranked Kansas as 9th in the nation for long-term services and supports, but “I worry about the long-term care industry’s ability to maintain this exemplary ranking in the future given many of the cuts we’re facing right now.”

AARP’s study, which recommends that lower-ranking states follow the top quartiles’ paths to higher performance, follows news that the Kansas Department on Aging has developed several new initiatives to reform long term care in Kansas. New standards for HCBS/Frail Elderly care plans were initiated Sept. 1st, and Secretary on Aging Shawn Sullivan said a reform plan to divert nursing home residents to assisted living was necessary to standardize procedures.

In addition to cuts and standardization at the state level, long term caregivers are also bracing for an estimated 11.1% cut in Medicare reimbursements effective October 1. Providers will receive approximately \$49.62 less per patient per day, which amounts to a total of \$29.4 million for skilled nursing facilities in Kansas.

“Our state ranks this high because we are great caregivers. This ranking reflects that very personal relationship most caregivers have with their residents and their families. State cuts are putting that relationship in jeopardy,” Luxem said. “Long term care providers routinely accept much less from Medicaid than the actual cost of providing care, but we continue to provide care for the resident because, frankly, it’s the right thing to do. I’m not sure how much longer providers can sustain these cuts and continue to provide top-ranking care in Kansas.”

The full report from AARP can be viewed at KHCA’s website, www.khca.org.