



American Association
of Homes and Services
for the Aging

**NEWS
RELEASE**

Embargoed until noon, November 3, 2003

DRAFT

Contact: Bruce Rosenthal, 202-508-9499, brosenthal@aahsa.org
Deborah Cloud, 202-508-9458, dcloud@aahsa.org

**New Federal Initiative to Foster Excellence in Home Health
Statement by William L. Minnix, Jr., D.Min.,
President and CEO, American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Older adults want to remain in their own homes as long as possible and they need information to make the best choices about services and providers. The new Home Health Quality Initiative announced today by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will help home health providers maintain and continuously improve the quality of their services. The initiative will also help consumers identify quality home health.

The pursuit of quality in home health services will be greatly aided by the new CMS initiative. By defining home health quality measures and providing comparable information on all home health providers across the nation, this U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) initiative will be an invaluable resource.

Quality matters, and because we know that performance differs among home health providers, it is essential that we identify true measures of quality care that – uniformly applied and easily understood – can be used as a tool both for continuously improving provider performance and educating consumers.

It is time for the public to have reliable, meaningful data to help make informed decisions, and it is time for home health providers and government to come together to give the public that information. The initiative is an important step in that direction, and we pledge our support in working with all parties to make this endeavor a success.

The 5,600 mission-driven, not-for-profit aging services providers who are members of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging support efforts to help home health providers continuously improve their care; eliminate providers that don't share that commitment to quality; and give the public peace of mind that they and their loved ones can receive quality home health services.

The Nursing Home Quality Initiative that was launched last year and now the Home Health Quality Initiative demonstrate that Secretary Thompson, Administrator Scully, and this Administration have made quality and consumer education a high priority. We applaud them for their efforts in this regard and look forward to continued cooperation with the Administration on long-term care quality improvement.

###

The American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA) is committed to advancing the vision of healthy, affordable, ethical aging services for America. The association represents 5,600 mission-driven, not-for-profit nursing homes, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living and senior housing facilities, and community service organizations. Every day, AAHSA's members serve more than one million older persons across the country. AAHSA's Web site is www.aahsa.org.