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NEW REPORT FOCUSES ON POWERFUL FEDERAL MECHANISM TO IMPROVE NURSING HOME CARE

Long Term Care Community Coalition/University of California Study Examines National Trends and Issues Recommendations for Innovative Uses of Civil Money Penalties

"This report identifies important, underutilized, remedies for nursing home problems."

Alice H. Hedt, Executive Director of the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform

NEW YORK, March 13, 2006 - As the "Baby Boomers" get older, increasing financial constraints will become more of a problem in ensuring quality care in our nation's long term care facilities. Civil money penalties (CMPs)/fines against nursing homes for violations of good standards of care, present a powerful opportunity to improve care. The collected CMP funds are an available pool of money that could be used in innovative ways to improve the quality of life and care for residents. Unfortunately, too few states currently exercise this option.

This study, undertaken with support of The Commonwealth Fund, examines how monies collected from CMPs/fines are a potentially powerful source of funding to improve the lives of residents. According to Charlene Harrington, co-project director and University of California professor, "We found a wide variation among states in issuing and collecting CMPs/fines. However, overall, there is a large amount of money that could be used to improve nursing home care. Forty six states reported having \$60 million available in accounts from CMPs/fines in 2005."

The report, **Funding for Innovation: A Review of State Practices with Civil Monetary Penalties**, includes details of projects in six states and findings of a survey with Long Term-Care ombudsmen and consumers. Additionally, it features a stand alone action plan that all stakeholders – including citizens, ombudsmen and long term care providers - can utilize to make the recommendations a reality. "There are many innovative ways that these funds can be used to help nursing home residents. We learned many lessons about how projects using these funds should be selected and funded," said, Cynthia Rudder, LTCCC's Director of Special Projects, and co-project director.

Barbara Manard of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging and Brian Purtell of the American Health Care Association (both of whom served on the project's national advisory committee) said, "We applaud this report because it calls for financial resources - which are currently available - to be used in a manner that aims to improve the quality of life and care for the frail, elderly and disabled who rely on the care delivered in our nation's nursing homes. "

The full report can be found at: www.ltccc.org and www.nursinghomeaction.org.