

# News Release



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**April 29, 2010**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Nursing Home Week 2010: A Time to Think About Long Term Care**

**Baton Rouge, LA --** As Nursing Home Week begins on May 9, this is a good time for Louisianans to salute the dedicated work of caregivers throughout our state who, under difficult of circumstances, provide compassionate care and services to our most vulnerable seniors and persons with disabilities. This is also a time to reflect on how we as a society care for our nation's frail, elderly and disabled.

In a proclamation signed by Governor Bobby Jindal, Nursing Home Week in the State of Louisiana is said to be in honor of "Louisiana's citizens who now reside in nursing homes [who] have made valuable contributions to the growth and prosperity of our state" and of "nursing facilities [that] provide caring and supportive services that make quality of life possible for our loved ones."

Attending to another person's health and well-being remains one of the finest and noblest callings, and the men and women staffing Louisiana's nearly 300 nursing facilities demonstrate daily their commitment to helping others.

While we commend our caregivers and other nursing home staff, it's essential to note that there are not enough skilled nursing staff – licensed nurses and Certified Nurse Assistants – to serve our present and forecast patient population. This is emerging as one of the most critical problems facing Louisiana's health care system.

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Our state finds itself dangerously short of qualified nursing staff, just as the front edge of the baby-boom retirement wave approaches and will eventually increase the overall demand for skilled nursing care. Maintaining ready access to quality, skilled nursing care and ensuring that an adequate number of caregivers exists won't just happen – it will occur only if we as a society decide that the proper investment in long term care isn't just an option, but a necessity.

The fact that Mother's Day coincides with the beginning of National Nursing Home Week should give us pause to consider the many challenges to long term care that need to be addressed so that our mothers, parents, friends and neighbors receive the care and dignity they deserve in their golden years. Enriching Every Day, our theme this year, should reflect our appreciation to seniors for their life experiences and valuable contributions to the overall community and our well-being.

This week, let's make it a point to consider what we, as a state, must do to strengthen our system of nursing care, and recognize the talented and compassionate individuals who work day in and day out in nursing homes. Without a doubt, our caregivers are indispensable. They ensure a better quality of life for people in need while also providing peace of mind to their families and friends.

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