

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
QUALITY LONG-TERM CARE**
AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AT THE NEW SCHOOL www.newschool.edu

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**KEY LEADERS WARN OF LOOMING LONG-TERM CARE CRISIS
AND CALL FOR NATIONAL SOLUTIONS**

***The National Commission for Quality Long-Term Care releases final
report with recommendations to improve a severely strained long-
term care delivery system***

December 3-Washington, DC- A national commission headed by former Senator Bob Kerrey and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich today released its final report warning of a coming crisis in long-term care and calling on the presidential candidates to address this crisis in their policy platforms and on the campaign trail. The Commission sketched out a perfect storm of events - longer life spans, a growing elderly population and increasing costs of care – that if ignored, will develop into a national crisis.

The commission's final report includes recommended next steps in areas of quality, workforce, and technology, and guiding financing principles that the nation should take to build a sustainable and high-quality long-term care system. The commission also released the results of a national survey that illustrates broad agreement on the need to address the nation's system for long-term care.

"Today's long-term care system strains to accomplish tasks for which it was never designed and for a population whose scale was never envisioned," said Bob Kerrey, co-chair of the commission and president of The New School. "All stakeholders in the system- individuals, families, care givers and policy makers - confront challenges that must be addressed to meet the increasing demand for quality long- term care."

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRINCIPLES:

The Commission's final report focuses on four critical elements that affect long-term care delivery: quality, workforce, technology and finance. Commission members now call on

providers and policy makers to use these recommendations and principles to advance long-term care reform:

- **Quality:** The nation can reform the long-term care system by developing innovations that focus on improving an individual's quality of life and quality of care including developments for standardized measurements for quality, moving towards a system of consumer- centered care, dissemination of comparative quality information, and supports for family caregivers.
- **Workforce:** With a documented shortage of long-term care professionals nationwide, we must offer tangible support to those who provide care. That means improving compensation and incentives, providing training, leadership development and opportunities for advancement, and ensuring respect for the workforce as distinct from the healthcare labor market.
- **Technology:** Strengthening federal and industry efforts to develop health information technology and to conduct innovative research that enhances consumer independence while safeguarding privacy is vital and should be coupled with open communication and data sharing.
- **Finance:** Financing the long-term care system is a national problem that requires a national solution. The system should include ensuring access to quality care for all, affordability for individuals and society, and promoting a shared responsibility among government, individuals, and the private sector.

SURVEY RESULTS:

A nationwide survey conducted in September 2007 shows broad agreement on the need to address the nation's long-term care system. While recent data suggests that real improvement is occurring, there is widespread consensus that more must be done. Key survey results revealed that:

- Voters recognize the need to reform the long-term care system; 94% feel that reforming the long-term care system is important, including 74% who feel it is very important. Most (69%) also feel the issue has gone largely unaddressed by the presidential candidates.
- Eighty five percent agree that our nation has an obligation to provide quality long-term care services to the elderly including majorities of self-identified Democrats, Independents and Republicans.
- Most voters support the creation of a voluntary contribution system for financing long-term care. Almost 2 in 3 say they would participate in such a system, even at the cost of \$50 a month.
- The majority of voters have some personal experience with long-term care. Six in ten have had a relative in the long-term care system, and a quarter currently has a relative receiving long-term care.
- The results illustrate voters' confusion about how long-term care in this country is financed. A third (34%) believe most long-term care is paid for by Medicare, one in five (20%) believe most long-term care is paid for by Medicaid (in fact the largest source of funding, accounting for 49% of long-term care spending in 2004) and about the same amount (22%) believe individuals and their families pay for most long-term care. Thirteen percent say they do not know how most long-term care is financed under the current system.

“While the problems in the nation’s long-term care system are deep set and have existed for decades, they can be fixed. It is the nation’s moral, financial, and social responsibility to address its flaws and the Commission created a framework for discussion and future action to do so,” said Commission Co-Chair Newt Gingrich. “The heart of the problem is how we pay for long-term care in this country. It drains individuals, families and government and does not always ensure quality. We must create a financing system that encourages savings and planning, shared responsibility and allows people the choices they need to maintain independence,” continued Gingrich.

Long-term care leaders also called upon the presidential candidates to focus on the challenges the nation faces on sustaining and improving the long-term care system, charging the candidates with the mission of discussing these challenges on the campaign trail and presenting ideas about how to solve them.

In a letter and questionnaire sent to all of the presidential candidates, commissioners called for a vigorous debate on the very real, urgent problem facing families all across the country and urged them to announce plans and act now to forestall this crisis and bring relief and hope to all Americans who are concerned about caring for their loved ones. Health care has been among the most-discussed domestic issues in the 2008 presidential debate, but long-term care has been glaringly absent from dialogue. As baby boomers age, emerging challenges to the long-term care system in place today and the financing behind it must be addressed by the nation’s leaders.

Press Conference being held at the Russell Senate Office Building; Room 385, 10 am.

Teleconference beginning at 11:30 am; Dial In: (866) 219-5260.

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ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The National Commission for Quality Long-Term Care is a non-partisan, independent body charged with improving long-term care in America. Appointed commissioners reflect a diversity of experience in government, academia, quality improvement and long-term care.

The Commission, which is overseen by The New School, grew out of an industry-led quality initiative called *Quality First, A Covenant for Healthy, Affordable, and Ethical Long Term Care*. In 2004, the three leading industry organizations called for an independent commission to:

- Examine the quality of long-term care in America;
- Identify factors influencing the ability to improve quality; and
- Recommend national strategies for sustainable quality improvement.

Funding for the Commission’s work is provided by the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care, the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, and the American Health Care Association.

Information on the Commission can be found at: www.ncqltc.org

Commissioners

Former Senator Bob Kerrey, Co-Chair
President, The New School

Former Speaker Newt Gingrich, Co-Chair
CEO, The Gingrich Group

The Honorable Haley Barbour
Governor of Mississippi

The Honorable Phil Bredesen
Governor of Tennessee

Former Senator David Durenberger
Chair, National Institute of Health Policy

Monsignor Charles J. Fahey
Program Officer-Milbank Memorial Fund. Professor Emeritus - Fordham University

The Honorable Nancy L. Johnson
Former Congresswoman for Connecticut's Fifth District

Mary Jane Koren, MD
Assistant Vice President, The Commonwealth Fund

Mike Magee, MD
Senior Fellow in Health Policy, CAST; Host, HealthCommentary.org.

The Honorable Jim McCrery
Congressman for Louisiana

Michael Millenson
Independent consultant and the Mervin Shalowitz, MD Visiting Scholar, Health Industry Management Program, Kellogg School of Management

William D. Novelli
CEO, AARP

Richard Payne, MD
Director, Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life, Duke University Divinity School

The Honorable Earl Pomeroy
Congressman for North Dakota

Sister Mary Jean Ryan
President and CEO, SSM Health Care

Judith A. Salerno, MD, MS
Deputy Director, National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health (NIH)

William J. Scanlon
Senior Policy Advisor, Health Policy R & D

The Honorable Gordon Smith
Senator from Oregon

Sandra R. Smoley, RN, BSN
President and CEO, The Sandy Smoley Group

Buck Stinson
President, Long-Term Care Insurance, Genworth Financial

Jeanette C. Takamura, MSW, PhD
Dean & Professor, Columbia University School of Social Work

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Senator from Oregon

Staff

Doug Pace
Executive Director, National Commission for Quality Long-Term Care

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