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## **HUNDREDS TO BLANKET DETROIT/SHOREWAY NEIGHBORHOOD TO RALLY AGAINST PROPOSED STATE BUDGET CUTS**

**Cleveland** — Thousands of people could be left out in the cold, under state budget plans for Medicare and Medicaid funding proposed by Governor Ted Strickland. That's why nursing home caregivers, residents, volunteers, and family members, representing nearly 2 thousand residents at 5 non-profit nursing home facilities in our area, will gather in front of St. Augustine Health Campus, 7801 Detroit Ave., on **Wednesday, April 22**. Holding banners and signs, hundreds of people will protest the Governor's proposed \$112.2 million budget reduction in Medicaid funding to nursing home residents and the increased bed tax. **The rally will begin at 2:00 p.m.** An extensive letter writing campaign is also underway.

Under the proposed budget, Medicaid stimulus dollars will be directed toward home-based care, in an effort to give residents choices of where they want to live; although thousands will still be unable to take advantage of that choice, because their health care needs demand the care that only a nursing home can give. An increase in the bed tax and a new reimbursement structure will severely jeopardize quality for those individuals who must rely on a Skilled Nursing Facility for their care.

Fifteen facilities would lose over \$2 million over the biennium as a result of this budget. "This kind of reduction can only mean fewer jobs, reduced benefits and a lot less services and care for the for the very sick and aging – who need more care, not less. The state is turning its back on its most frail and vulnerable residents." Said Dana Carns, Director of Marketing, Development & Public Relations

"We need better funding and staffing to ensure quality nursing home care," said Patrick Gareau, President/CEO of St. Augustine Health Campus. "The crisis of care must be addressed now. We are taking care of more complex cases and needier residents than we did five years ago. With more technology and more staff, the cost of caring for nursing home residents has risen 19% while our (St. Augustine's) Medicaid payments have increased by 1%."

"My wife is a nursing home resident and I want to make sure that underfunding does not deprive her of the care she deserves," said Dominic Yanni. "When health problems arise and there is no other viable alternative, it is comforting to know there people and places where the residents are treated with dignity and respect". Compared to home care, nursing homes provide community, activities, entertainment and good food. Here I am able to LIVE life, not just "be alive", said Charles O'Fahey, nursing home resident.

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