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## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Patrick Cobb

Office: 803-765-7373

Cell: 803-261-0304

### **Long-Term Care in South Carolina: A Look to the Future**

AARP SC, Lt. Governor's Office on Aging, and SC Public Health Institute to Host Long-Term Care Forum

(Columbia) Choice, control and cost effectiveness were the themes echoed today regarding the future of long-term care from three of the South Carolina's leading organizations working to jumpstart a long range plan for long-term care in the state. AARP South Carolina, the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging, and the South Carolina Public Health Institute brought together elected officials, advocates, and stakeholders today for a "look to the future" forum on long-term care.

"Convening key stakeholders around the future of long-term care in South Carolina is an important step, but it is only a beginning," said Dr. Donna Richter, executive director of the South Carolina Public Health Institute. "We must develop a strategic approach that enables our state to meet the needs of its growing older adult population through an array of accessible and affordable long-term care options."

"With more retirees relocating to South Carolina and our growing number of older adults, we are seeing a greater need for long-term care services," said Lt. Governor Andre' Bauer, who oversees the state's Office on Aging. In 2003, the Mature Adults Count reported that Medicaid is the primary payers for over 70 percent of South Carolina's nursing home residents – an impact of great concern to the state budget. South Carolina's 60+ population is expected to reach 1.35 million by 2025. Even more staggering, the state had the highest recent percentage increase (22.3%) among eight southeastern states in population 65+.

"People should have choices about where they live, what services they receive, who provides those services, and how they are delivered," said Enid Kassner, AARP director of Independent Living and Long-Term Care and a co-author of the recently released AARP report ["Taking the Long View: Investing in Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Is Cost Effective."](#)

The study reports that states with declining revenue, such as South Carolina, should take this opportunity to focus on a longer-term and more cost-effective reform options for long term-care systems, such as promoting home and community-based services over institutional care. “We have found that, over time, states that have invested in home and community-based services have a lower rate of overall Medicaid spending growth compared to states that continue to rely on nursing homes,” said Kassner.

“AARP’s goal is to have an affordable, consumer and caregiver-focused system providing coverage for, and access to, high quality long-term services and supports for independent living,” said Kassner .

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our Web site, [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org). AARP Foundation is our affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.