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GOVERNOR

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Governor Rick Scott Signs Continuing Care Facilities Bill (HB 127)

~ Provides two additional options for a nursing home to satisfy financial requirements of the Gold Seal Program ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) Secretary Elizabeth Dudek praised the signing of House Bill 127, relating to continuing care facilities. Currently, nursing homes qualified for the Gold Seal Award may submit applications to the Agency to be reviewed for consideration by the Governor's Panel on Excellence in Long-Term Care. Nursing homes must meet strict financial and performance standards to be considered for the award. HB 127 provides additional options for nursing homes applying for the award to meet the financial requirements.

Secretary Dudek said, "I want to thank Governor Scott and the Legislature for giving the Agency more flexibility in rewarding Florida's most deserving nursing homes with the Gold Seal Award. Florida has seen a significant growth in the number of nursing homes that qualify for the award, and our quality of care standards remain high. Nursing homes applying for the award must meet rigorous standards of care, and House Bill 127 will allow us to recognize more of these exceptional facilities."

HB 127 was sponsored by Rep. Travis Cummings, R-Orange Park, in the House and Sen. Kelli Stargel, R-Lakeland, in the Senate. The bill passed both chambers unanimously before being signed by the Governor.

Rep. Cummings said, "Nursing homes in Florida continue to provide exceptional service to thousands of our residents, and with House Bill 127 the Agency for Health Care Administration now has more opportunity to recognize our state's highest performing homes. Thank you to Governor Scott for signing this piece of legislation."

Sen. Stargel added, "I want to thank Governor Scott for signing House Bill 127 into law this week. Florida's nursing homes play a valuable role in providing care for our most vulnerable citizens, and this bill will make it easier to designate deserving nursing homes with the Gold Seal Award."

The bill allows nursing homes that are part of a continuing care facility to demonstrate that they meet Agency financial standards through use of their community's financial statements. Similarly, nursing homes that are part of a corporate entity will be able to submit a consolidated corporate financial statement and demonstrate that the corporate entity meets the Agency's financial standards.



Florida has seen the number of Gold Seal nursing homes grow from 15 in 2010 to 32 today. Only 4 percent of nursing homes currently qualify for the award, but the financial requirements that are addressed by HB 127 have created barriers for some facilities. Some of the qualities a nursing home must have to be considered are: an excellent regulatory history, a quality of care score equivalent to a 5-star overall ranking in the Nursing Home Guide, evidence of community involvement and a consumer satisfaction process.

Gold Seal Award applications are accepted twice a year with the next applications due on March 15, 2016. HB 127 became effective upon the Governor's signature and the new financial standards will be considered during the March application process.

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The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. The Agency administers Florida's Medicaid program, licenses and regulates almost 48,500 health care facilities and 43 health plans, and publishes health care data and statistics at www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov. Additional information about Agency initiatives is available via Facebook (AHCAFlorida), Twitter (@AHCA_FL) and YouTube (/AHCAFlorida).