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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Texas Team Named an Official Future of Nursing Action Coalition
To Advance the Health of Texans through Nursing**

Announcement Coincides with First Year Progress Since IOM Report Release

AUSTIN, TEXAS, September 27, 2011 – In a long anticipated, national announcement made September 26, by the Future of Nursing: *Campaign for Action*, coordinated through the Center to Champion Nursing in America, an initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Texas Team Coalition – a diverse, statewide group of nurses, nursing organizations, hospitals, schools/universities, consumer businesses and statewide advocacy groups – was selected as an official Texas Action Coalition, convened to advance the Future of Nursing: *Campaign for Action*.

The Future of Nursing: *Campaign for Action* is the national implementation phase of a highly regarded, two-year study and resulting Institute of Medicine report, the *Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. In the 2010 landmark report, recommendations are made for significantly changing nurses' roles, responsibilities and education so they can better contribute to improving the U.S. health care delivery system. Not only do nurses deliver the most direct care to patients and coordinate care across the health continuum, but they are also

the largest health care workforce numbering more than three million nationally and over 250,000 in Texas.

The Texas Action Coalition will seek to collaboratively implement the report's recommendations by functioning as field operations for advancing comprehensive health care change at the local, regional and statewide levels. It will work to collaboratively address the growing demand for high quality, cost-effective and accessible health care across the state.

"If future demand is to be met for safe, high quality, accessible and affordable health care, the roles of many health care professions must be reconsidered and nursing is certainly no exception," said Clair Jordan, MSN, RN, executive director of Texas Nurses Association. "Nurses are integral to overcoming our health care challenges. With the highest percentage of uninsured residents in the U.S., and continuing to face a severe nursing shortage in the future, Texas is in dire need of the transformations outlined in the IOM report."

With the RWJF announcement, Texas joins a growing list of 36 states that have applied for and been selected as action coalitions. Two organizations will share the leadership responsibilities within the Texas Action Coalition – Texas Nurses Association who represents nursing; and Blue Cross Blue and Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) who represents non-nursing stakeholders.

"We are excited about supporting this initiative which recognizes the essential role that nurses will play in the future of health care," said Cindy Johnson, vice president of Healthcare Clinical Operations, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. "As the largest health insurer in the state, BCBSTX looks forward to making a contribution to the achievement of the coalition's goals in Texas through collaboration with other coalition members."

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Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action is a collaboration created by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the AARP Foundation to ensure that all Americans have access to high quality, patient-centered care in which nurses contribute as essential partners in system-wide transformation.

Action Coalitions are convened to advance the Future of Nursing: *Campaign for Action*. Comprised of diverse groups of stakeholders at the state level that can effect long-term sustainable change, Action Coalitions will further the overall effort by capturing best practices, determining research needs, tracking lessons learned and identifying replicable models.

Texas Nurses Association (www.texasnurses.org) is a professional organization of registered nurses, and the only Texas constituent member association of the American Nurses Association. Texas Nurses Association seeks to promote excellence in nursing by helping nurses achieve quality patient care through high standards of practice, legislative involvement, and public policy advocacy.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas – the only statewide, customer-owned health insurer in Texas – is the largest provider of health benefits in the state, working with nearly 40,000 physicians and 400 hospitals to serve 4.6 million members in all 254 counties. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas is a Division of Health Care Service Corporation (which operates Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans in Texas, Illinois, Oklahoma and New Mexico), the country's largest customer-owned health insurer and fourth largest health insurer overall. Health Care Service Corporation is a Mutual Legal Reserve Company and an independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.