



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **WISE & Healthy Aging Launches Caregiver Training Academy Featuring Microlending Component**

**Santa Monica (November 15, 2012)** – The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) recently announced an award of over \$3.5 million funding to the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and its Springdale-based Schmieding Center for Senior Health and Education to support the development and dissemination of enhanced home caregiver training. “WISE & Healthy Aging is proud to be working in collaboration with UAMS to implement this innovative caregiver training project in California,” says Grace Cheng Braun, President and CEO of WISE & Healthy Aging. “Currently, there are not enough direct home care workers, and the overwhelming majority of them have little or no formal training. As the number of dependent elders continues to grow, especially those over 80 years of age, the demand for quality caregiver will be dramatic.”

The project addresses the growing workforce shortage and inadequate training of direct care workers who assist older adults to remain in their homes and avoid nursing home admissions. CMMI estimates the project will demonstrate approximately \$1.28 million savings in gross Medicare expenditures over the course of the three-year grant, and additional savings beyond the term of the grant.

Most of the funding will be used to develop a more advanced training module to enhance Schmieding’s established curriculum, to create a novel microcredit fund for prospective students to cover tuition, and to demonstrate effective delivery of this training through four diverse organizations located in four states (Arkansas, Hawaii, California and Texas). WISE & Healthy Aging is launching its Caregiver Training Academy as part of the implementation of the CMMI award, and is completing the state process for a California-approved Schmieding certified nursing assistant (CNA) training curriculum.

Other important parts of the project include family caregiver training and the development of distance-education capability for training of students whose schedules do not permit on-site class attendance. The advanced aide worker produced by this project will be better prepared to perform as an integral part of the health care team in the home. Dr. Larry D. Wright, Executive Director of the Schmieding Center and UAMS Associate Professor in the Reynolds Department of Geriatrics, is the Principal Investigator on the project. “This project will be a significant effort to address a critical workforce shortage that represents a serious challenge to the American healthcare

system as it attempts to care for a rapidly growing population of older adults,” Dr. Wright said.

For information about the WISE & Healthy Aging Caregiver Training Academy, please call: (310) 394-9871, ext. 263.

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**WISE & Healthy Aging** is the result of the 2007 merger of WISE Senior Services and Center for Healthy Aging. With a combined 70 years’ experience serving older adults, the nonprofit organization brings together a synergy of services, information, programs and support for seniors, those who care for them and the professionals who work with them.