



August 11, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS

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PHCA Commends Congress for Extending Medicaid Aid

Funds will help to continue quality care to frail, elderly in nursing homes

HARRISBURG (Aug. 11, 2010) – The Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA) commends those members of Pennsylvania’s Congressional delegation who voted to extend critical Medicaid aid to the states, saying it will protect the health and well-being of elderly and disabled individuals living in long-term care facilities.

Dr. Shapiro also thanked Governor Rendell for his leadership among the nation’s governors in advocating for the additional Medicaid aid.

“This was by no means an easy vote – but it was the right vote,” said Stuart Shapiro, MD, President and CEO of PHCA and CALM. “Without this critical funding, Pennsylvania’s nursing homes most likely would have faced funding cuts that would have jeopardized caregivers’ jobs and ultimately, also jeopardized the quality of and access to nursing home care in Pennsylvania and across the nation.”

The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1586, the Education Jobs and Medicaid Assistance Act, by a 247-161 vote. The Senate passed the bill last week. President Obama signed the legislation into law shortly after the House vote. The legislation sends approximately \$668 million in additional Medicaid aid to Pennsylvania.

Dr. Shapiro thanked Pennsylvania Senators Bob Casey and Arlen Specter and Representatives Jason Altmire, Robert Brady, Christopher Carney, Mark Critz, Kathy Dahlkemper, Mike Doyle, Chaka Fattah, Tim Holden, Paul Kanjorski, Patrick Murphy, Joseph Sestak, and Allyson Schwartz for voting in favor of this vital legislation.

“These legislators demonstrated true leadership with this vote. They recognized that despite the potential political implications, without this funding, programs that support Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable citizens – including our children, our disabled and our elderly – would have been severely, negatively impacted,” Dr. Shapiro said. “They put the welfare of their constituents before the safety of their jobs.”

Dr. Shapiro added that over the last several months, Governor Rendell has worked tirelessly to help advance this critical legislation. The Governor previously said that without the additional aid, as many as 20,000 Pennsylvanians would have lost their jobs, including state workers, school teachers, firefighters, social workers and police officers.

“Hopefully now, those cuts will not have to be made,” Dr. Shapiro said.

Nearly 80,000 elderly and disabled Pennsylvanians live in the state’s 720 nursing homes, which provide around-the-clock medical care. Another 90,000 Pennsylvanians work in the state’s nursing homes. Currently, nursing homes are under-reimbursed nearly \$14 a day – or \$5,000 a year – for every Medicaid resident in their care, and two-thirds (64 percent) of residents are on Medicaid.

“Clearly, the extension of Medicaid aid provides a lifeline to states so they can continue to provide services to their most vulnerable citizens, but it doesn’t solve the crisis that lays ahead,” Dr. Shapiro said. “We must work together, at the state and federal levels, to ensure adequate funding and create a stable workforce that is ready to meet the care needs of the baby boomers.”

PHCA/CALM is a statewide advocacy organization for Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable older residents and their providers of care. Members comprise for-profit, nonprofit and government providers. PHCA/CALM represents more than 334 long-term care and senior service providers that care for almost 33,200 elderly and disabled individuals. For more information call 717-221-1800 or visit www.phca.org.

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