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NEWS

Contact: Alison Everett, 717-221-7935
Cell: 717-608-5463

PHCA/CALM BACKS ID BADGES FOR HEALTH-CARE WORKERS

Nursing homes already require tags; state legislation would expand the requirement to other practitioners

WAYNE, Delaware County --- The Pennsylvania Health Care Association and the Center for Assisted Living Management today supported two state legislative proposals that would require on-the-job health-care practitioners to wear identification badges, a practice already in place in all nursing homes across the commonwealth.

Don Phillips, director of human resources at the 207-bed ManorCare skilled nursing facility in Wallingford, Delaware County, submitted testimony to the House Professional Licensure Committee, which is considering two measures (H.B. 1482 and H.B. 1879) that would expand requirements for photo identification badges to other health-care providers and practitioners, including hospital and home health care employees. Nursing home employees already wear ID badges in accordance with the state regulations.

Phillips, who has worked for more than 30 years in long-term care, said experience shows that ID badges enhance protections for both patients and caregivers alike.

A badge with a picture helps patients know that individuals who are providing their care really are who they say they are, and that they have the credentials to provide the care. For those receiving home health care, it is another tool to protect vulnerable patients from individuals who may prey upon the frail elderly and disabled. ID badges also serve to make health-care workers more accountable for the manner in which they provide services, and they assist facilities in identifying workers who may be accused of neglect or treatment errors, Phillips said.

“Aside from the commonsense health and safety protections that ID badges provide, they also help to ensure quality care and quality of life for residents,” Phillips said. “You cannot say enough about what it means for residents and family members to easily put a face with a name. It builds a level of trust that enables caretakers to do their job more effectively.”

Phillips urged the committee to consider adding a ‘grandfather’ provision to the proposed legislation for health care providers that already require ID badges, as well as flexibility on the ID badge specifications to prevent unnecessary administrative costs. He explained that many nursing home badges are multi-functional, serving not only to identify caretakers but also to help with timekeeping and payroll.

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 and CALM represent 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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