

Testimony of Don Phillips  
Director of Human Resources at Wallingford ManorCare  
before the  
House Professional Licensure Committee  
November 6, 2009

Good morning Chairman McGeehan, Chairman Adolph and members of the House Professional Licensure Committee.

My name is Don Phillips. I am currently the Director of Human Resources at Wallingford, ManorCare. Wallingford is a 207-bed nursing home located in Wallingford, PA. I have been with ManorCare for close to 10 years. In this position I am responsible for the overall function of human resource activities and employee relations. I formerly worked as the Deputy Director of Personnel for Delaware County for over 20 years. Fair Acres, which is the County's 911-bed long term care facility, was one of the units under my direction for Personnel activity.

I am pleased to come before you today to offer comments on behalf of the Pennsylvania Health Care Association and Center for Assisted Living Management. Our association represents more than 300 providers along the full continuum of long term care services, ranging from retirement housing with services, nursing homes, assisted living residences, personal care homes and home health organizations. Our members are based throughout the Commonwealth and include proprietary and non-profit organizations.

I am here, as you know, to testify on the matter of two House Bills, House Bill 1482 and House Bill 1879. The provisions of the bills relate to photo identification tags of health care practitioners. While one bill is an amendment to the Health Care Facilities Act and the other is a standalone piece of legislation, both seek to accomplish a similar goal, each in their own approach. Nursing homes, while operating under the auspices of the Health Care Facilities Act, are not included in Rep. Mann's bill, which simply targets the home care industry. Rep. Killion's bill, however, would include nursing homes, like Wallingford, in its scope.

As you are aware, the practice of identification tags has been in place for health care facilities for many years and we believe it is an appropriate practice that should be implemented by all health care practitioners. In fact, it is clear in our regulations that workers in our buildings wear identification. Our regulations specifically state that health care practitioners and health care providers employed by health care facilities, when working and clinically feasible, must wear an identification tag. The tag must include the individual's full name and title, with some exceptions if treating patients who exhibit symptoms of irrationality or violence.

As you can see, I am wearing my identification tag to this hearing today. This is the type of badge that all ManorCare employees are required to wear. It shows my name, title and the company that I work for. As in most health care facilities, at ManorCare employee identification tags are multi-functional; they are not only used for purposes of identification but also used for time keeping and payroll. .

The practice of wearing identification tags provides protection to health care facilities and health care professionals but more importantly provides protection to the consumers of health care services. Requiring health care practitioners to wear identification tags is an easy way to allow consumers to be fully informed, put them at ease and provide them with assurances that the individual providing services to them is who they say they are and has the necessary credentials to provide the needed services. I don't have to tell the members of this committee that a consumer receiving health care services in their home can be vulnerable to criminal acts by people looking to prey upon our senior citizens. We believe that requiring health care workers to wear identification tags is one common-sense way to minimize those situations and to add a level of safety for these consumers. It is a real 'win win' for both the providers and the consumers.

It has also been our experience that wearing identification tags can also serve to make the health care worker more accountable for the services they provide and the manner in which they are provided, as well as assist in identifying workers that may be accused of neglect or treatment errors. It gives family members and visitors to our facilities comfort and familiarity when visiting their loved ones. I am sure you would agree that being able to put a name with a face helps in establishing a good rapport with residents and family members.

As health care providers and advocates for the elderly and disabled of the Commonwealth, we fully support requirements that provide for consumer protections and their health and safety. Our only caution would be related to the detail specifications of the identification tags and the potential price tag involved with any changes for our facilities. As you may already know, nursing homes today lose on average, \$14/day on every Medicaid resident they serve. The average nursing home is 65% Medicaid. I only say this to caution the committee and the General Assembly on any identification badge legislation that they pass so it does not become an unfunded mandate on an industry that is already stretched financially.

Given that health care facilities currently have identification tag requirements in place, and as noted earlier in my testimony in most health care facilities the tags are multi-functional, when considering the specifications of the identification tag we respectfully request that consideration be given to the badges we already use. I ask that you allow for some flexibility in those specifications in order not to place any unnecessary administrative costs on the health care facilities that are currently in compliance. One possible consideration for the committee to consider would be to grandfather those entities or providers that are already required to provide identification and simply allow them to follow their current regulations, which I have included with my testimony. .

In closing, I would like to thank you once again for the opportunity to offer our comments and suggestions on this issue. I am pleased to offer the assistance of our organization as these bills move forward. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.

## **28 Pa. Code, Chapter 51**

### **§ 51.6. Identification of personnel.**

(a) When working in a health care facility and when clinically feasible, the following individuals shall wear an identification tag which displays that person's name and professional designation:

(1) Health care practitioners licensed or certified by Commonwealth agencies.

(2) Health care providers employed by health care facilities.

(b) The identification tag shall include the individual's full name. Abbreviated professional designations may be used only when the designation indicates licensure or certification by a Commonwealth agency, otherwise the full title shall be printed on the tag.

(c) The last name of the individual may be omitted or concealed when treating patients who exhibit symptoms of irrationality or violence.