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**NEWS**

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**Banning Mandatory Overtime for Nurses While Staffing Shortages  
Plague PA Health System Makes Little Sense, PHCA Says**  
*Hindering Patient Access to Quality Care a Major Downside of Mandatory Overtime Ban*

Harrisburg, PA – Stating that banning mandatory overtime for nurses involved in direct patient care could jeopardize seniors’ access to quality long term care itself, the Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA) today stated its opposition to SB 722, sponsored by Sen. Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia), which seeks to prohibit mandatory overtime for health care workers.

“We understand the arguments advanced by Sen. Tartaglione, and we respect her viewpoint, but we believe any attempt to ban mandatory overtime for direct care nursing staff could jeopardize seniors’ access to care as well as exacerbate the effects of the existing nurse staffing shortage,” stated Alan G. Rosenbloom, President and CEO of PHCA.

Rosenbloom urged the Senate Judiciary Committee -- which held a hearing today on SB 722 and issues surrounding mandatory overtime – to consider strategies to help boost the supply of nursing staff as opposed to limiting the existing capacity of the Commonwealth’s nursing workforce.

Noting nursing school admissions in Pennsylvania declined by almost 40 percent from 1995 to 1999, the PHCA President and CEO said new efforts such as the Pennsylvania Center for Health Careers, announced recently by Governor Rendell, will help address the ongoing shortage in nursing and other key health care careers in the Commonwealth.

“We need to make sure the approaches we take to address staffing shortages do not make the situation worse,” continued Rosenbloom. “Increasing regulatory requirements and what really amounts to an unfunded mandate will do nothing to help increase the supply of nurses in Pennsylvania – which is the real answer.”

*PHCA is a statewide membership services organization representing more than 325 long-term care and senior service providers throughout the Commonwealth. Additional information about PHCA is available by calling 717-221-1800 or visiting [www.phca.org](http://www.phca.org).*

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