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NEWS

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PHCA Joins Congressman Gerlach, Pennsylvanians United for Quality Care, Reading Caregivers to Urge Immediate Release of \$344 Million for PA Nursing Homes *Care Quality of Commonwealth's Most Vulnerable Frail, Elderly, Disabled Jeopardized*

Reading, PA – The Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA) today joined Congressman Jim Gerlach, the Pennsylvanians United for Quality Care, Reading area caregivers from Beverly Enterprises and others in urging the federal government to release \$344 million in supplemental Medicaid funding to ensure Pennsylvania's most vulnerable population of frail, elderly and disabled continue to receive quality long term care.

“Nursing home residents throughout the Commonwealth are in immediate jeopardy because Washington is not moving quickly enough to release these essential Medicaid funds,” warned Alan G. Rosenbloom, President and CEO of PHCA. “We appreciate today's show of support from Congressman Gerlach, who clearly understands the funding delay from Washington is having enormously negative repercussions here in Pennsylvania. We appreciate the fact he is working with Senator Specter and other members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation to ensure the funds are released.”

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) is responsible for disbursing the \$344 million in question, and is in the process of reviewing state applications for supplemental Medicaid funds intended to protect seniors' access to benefits and services, and to weather state budgetary crises nationwide. PHCA, the Service Employees International Union and other advocacy organizations have warned for months that failure by CMS to approve and release these funds on a timely basis could precipitate draconian Medical Assistance benefit cuts, severe staff reductions, care access problems and even facility closures.

Rosenbloom said the funds are needed immediately “to ensure caregivers in Reading and throughout the Commonwealth can provide high quality nursing home care, and to help ensure facilities have the staff necessary to do so.”

The PHCA President and CEO noted that Beverly -- a leading national provider of quality healthcare services for the elderly with 45 facilities in Pennsylvania -- has helped advocate for release of the funds. He observed that because staffing has a direct impact on quality, the failure of the federal government to promptly release these resources will undermine the solid efforts being made by Beverly and other providers to improve care quality in Pennsylvania's nursing homes.

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.

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