



NEWS

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Contact: Holly Lubart

(717) 221-7935

PHCA: Kickoff of Health Careers Week Focuses Needed Attention on Commonwealth's Workforce Crisis *PA Must Act Decisively, Swiftly to Develop Long Term Care Workforce* **Older Pennsylvanians' Care Quality, Quality of Life Threatened By Worsening Shortage**

Harrisburg, PA – Stating today's kickoff of Health Careers Week will bring much-needed attention to the growing crisis associated with the shortage of long term care workers, the President and CEO of the Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA) said part of the solution to addressing the problem is ensuring the public is aware that rewarding and challenging jobs with solid advancement potential are available.

"Health Careers Week, proclaimed by Governor Edward G. Rendell, is an excellent initiative to help create a better understanding and awareness of the many excellent, career-oriented jobs available in long term care," stated Alan G. Rosenbloom, President and CEO of PHCA. "With many Pennsylvanians of all ages seeking meaningful long term employment, it is our responsibility to make sure prospective employees are aware of the many opportunities to find a rewarding career with solid advancement potential."

PHCA has expressed concern about a Pennsylvania Department of Health report that found less than 10 percent of nurses in nursing homes are between the age of 20 and 34, and that almost 30 percent of registered nurses (RNs) under the age of 35 indicate they are planning to leave the field of nursing in the next 10 years. In addition, a recent study by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and U.S. Department of Labor (DoL) estimates the U.S. will need between 5.7 million to 6.5 million nurses, nurse aides, home health and personal care workers by 2050 to care for the 27 million Americans who will then require long term care – up from the 13 million citizens requiring long term care in 2000.

"Every study and analysis demonstrates the need for public policy initiatives directed towards recruiting, training and retaining our skilled nursing workforce – especially the key frontline caregivers who provide as much as 80 percent of direct patient care," stated Rosenbloom. "In addition to the chronic under funding of Medicaid, the high vacancy and turnover rates of key front line nursing personnel contribute to the underlying fragility of the Commonwealth's long term care workforce. Now more than ever, our nation must begin preparing to care for the millions of future retirees and persons with disabilities who will require care in long term, assisted living and other settings."

Health Careers Week is jointly sponsored by the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board, PA Center for Health Careers; the commonwealth's 23 Local Workforce Investment Boards; the Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania; the Department of Health; numerous health care, education and training providers; organized labor; and the state's workforce development agencies — the Departments of Aging, Community & Economic Development, Education, Labor & Industry, and Public Welfare.

"We appreciate the efforts of Health Secretary Calvin Johnson, Aging Secretary Nora Dowd-Eisenhower and all involved in Health Careers Week to help publicize the need to strengthen our nursing workforce," concluded

Rosenbloom. “We look forward to working with all concerned about this matter to ensure patients throughout our care continuum receive quality care today, and in the future.”

To get information about careers in the health care industry, or for a list of local events this week, visit www.pahealthcareers.org, a local CareerLink center, or www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us.

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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