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NEWS

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PHCA Urges Support for Legislative Efforts Promoting Long Term Care Insurance

Sather, Corman Bills Praised as Vehicles for Helping Generate Necessary Debate

Harrisburg, PA – Citing the urgent need to help individuals better prepare to meet their future long term care needs, the President and CEO of the Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA) today said two bills now pending in the General Assembly can collectively serve as vehicles for helping to generate a needed discussion on how to best promote and nurture a strong long term care insurance marketplace.

“Among the most important reforms needed to strengthen our nation’s long-term care system, and to help our citizens take greater control of their economic futures, is to gradually shift government’s role from solely a payer of long term care services to a government that helps individuals save and invest for their own long term care needs,” stated Stuart H. Shapiro, M.D., PHCA’s President and CEO.

Dr. Shapiro highlighted legislation introduced in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Senate by Rep. Larry Sather (R-Huntingdon) and Senator Jake Corman (R-Bellefonte), respectively, which would create a state long term care insurance partnership program, and provide a mechanism for individuals to qualify for coverage of the cost of their long term care needs under Medical Assistance (MA) without first being required to exhaust their personal assets. The PHCA President and CEO said Sather’s two bills, House Bill (HB) 93 and HB 804, and Corman’s bill, Senate Bill (SB) 1300, merit further discussion and debate.

“The impending ‘perfect storm’ of the aging baby boomer generation coupled with advances in health care and medical technology will allow vast numbers of Pennsylvanians to live longer – and that is obviously great news,” continued Dr. Shapiro. “But successfully addressing the advancing demographic tidal wave – which involves far more than shoring up Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid -- requires a fresh approach to providing for the long term care needs of individuals in home and community settings, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and the growing number of hybrid settings evolving throughout the continuum of care.”

Despite the fact there are several differences in how the Sather and Corman bills achieve their objective, Dr. Shapiro observed, the important point, he said, is to “advance the dialogue and the discussion in the General Assembly, and perfect the bills in a manner that maximizes the benefit for citizens and taxpayers alike.” Among the many tangible benefits to passing a bipartisan, widely-supported long term care insurance bill, he said, would be to help alleviate the growing financial pressure on Pennsylvania’s MA program by stimulating private-sector alternatives.

“PHCA intends to be a major proponent of private long term care insurance legislation in the months ahead, and we look forward to working cooperatively with the General Assembly and Governor to make its ultimate passage into law the priority it must be,” Dr. Shapiro concluded.

PHCA is a statewide membership services organization representing approximately 300 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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