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NEWS

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PHCA Praises Rendell, New House Leadership, for Major Emphasis on Healthcare
But Cautions Need to Properly Balance Expanded Coverage with Seniors' Existing Budget Needs

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA) today praised Governor Ed Rendell and the incoming leadership of the House of Representatives for their goal of making expanded health care access to more Pennsylvanians a high priority on the 2007 legislative agenda.

“We are now in the process of seeing states take the lead when it comes to expanding citizens’ access to affordable, quality health care -- and we welcome the fact Governor Rendell and the incoming House leadership are showing the leadership necessary to accomplish this important public policy objective,” stated Stuart H. Shapiro, M.D., President and CEO of PHCA.

Continued Dr. Shapiro, “However, the one important caveat is that we must keep an eye on ensuring that the funding stability of the entire long term care continuum is not compromised in a well meaning rush to expand health care eligibility and coverage for the broader population.”

The PHCA President and CEO pointed out that, ironically, this could present what he characterized as “a rob Peter to pay Paul scenario in which vulnerable seniors’ access to quality long term care could potentially be reduced as the budget is inevitably recalibrated” to achieve this new priority.

As Pennsylvania ranks third nationally in percent of population over 65, and second over age 85, he said, the challenge for the Rendell Administration and the Pennsylvania Legislature in 2007 is to continue facilitating seniors’ ability to access the care setting that best suits their individual need, while achieving the funding levels necessary to ensure maximum access to quality care for all Pennsylvanians.

”This will be a difficult balancing act, and we must keep a watchful eye on both the growing healthcare needs of the Commonwealth’s rapidly aging population, and the funding requirements needed to adequately provide that care – both for today and for the longer term,” Dr. Shapiro continued. “We look forward to working with the Governor and the General Assembly in a collegial, constructive manner to strike that correct balance in the year ahead,” he 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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