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NEWS

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**Country Meadows' President & CEO to Represent PHCA on WITF-TV's
"Smart Talk" to Discuss Long-Term Care Challenges in Pennsylvania**

Show Will Air Locally on Public TV in the Harrisburg Area at 8 p.m. Thursday, May 10

HARRISBURG -- G. Michael Leader, president and chief executive officer of Country Meadows Retirement Communities, will represent the Pennsylvania Health Care Association on WITF-TV's "Smart Talk," a weekly public affairs program that is turning its focus to the growing challenges that families face with respect to long-term care.

The hour-long show, which will include Sen. Pat Vance and other long-term care advocates in a roundtable discussion with host Nell McCormack Abom, will air live at 8 p.m. Thursday, May 10. The long-term care segment will be featured in the second half of the show. The episode will run again at noon Sunday, May 13.

WITF broadcasts reach audiences in more than 17 counties in central Pennsylvania, and "Smart Talk" is the only weekly prime-time public affairs television show in the region. Viewers can call into the live show with questions for the panelists.

Leader, who joined PHCA President and CEO Dr. Stuart Shapiro to talk about assisted living and personal care issues at a joint hearing of the state's House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee and House Health & Human Services Committee in April, will outline key issues to ensure Pennsylvania's frail, elderly and disabled residents get quality care in the best setting.

Pennsylvania ranks third nationally by percentage of population age 65 or older, behind Florida and West Virginia, and fourth in the number of residents age 85 or older --- a segment of the population that comprises the most intensive users of nursing home care. Nearly 70 percent of Pennsylvanians turning 65 this year eventually will require long-term care.

"Not only do these demographics pose significant care planning challenges for families, caregivers and state agencies whose charge it is to safeguard the elderly and others," Dr. Shapiro said, "but they also require us to find new ways to accommodate the burgeoning ranks of older Pennsylvanians and others in need of some level of assistance in daily life."

Among the topics of discussion on the show will be legislation (S.B. 704) introduced by Sen. Vance to define "assisted living." Thirty-seven states --- or more than three-fourths of the

country --- specifically define “assisted living.” Neighboring states such as New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland all have established assisted living licenses that allow providers to offer certain defined levels of health care within their facilities.

In Pennsylvania, there is no distinction between “personal care home” and “assisted living residence.” Under current law, facilities offering long-term care services are either licensed as personal care homes or nursing homes. With a few exceptions, personal care homes are permitted to admit residents who require personal care services, but not health-care services.

Nursing homes, however, serve the other end of the spectrum and provide care for the most vulnerable of the population. Sen. Vance’s bill would establish an entity called “assisted living” that would allow for a level of care between the two existing entities.

With the state’s aging population, personal care homes have become a popular senior housing option. There are close to 1,600 licensed personal care homes serving approximately 51,000 residents in Pennsylvania. Likewise, the commonwealth currently has 730 nursing homes with 89,471 beds, and demand for these services is growing. These trends are sure to continue, based on the demographic realities confronting Pennsylvania.

Country Meadows, a member of PHCA, is a family owned and operated business that employs 2,000 professionals who care for almost 3,000 residents living at 10 campuses in Allentown, Bethlehem, Harrisburg, Hershey, Lancaster, Mechanicsburg, Pittsburgh, Wyomissing and York. Country Meadows has facilities licensed as nursing homes as well as personal care homes.

PHCA members comprise for-profit, nonprofit and government providers. Overall, PHCA, along with its sister agency, the Center for Assisted Living Management (CALM), represents more than 300 long-term care and senior service providers that care for almost 33,500 elderly and disabled individuals across the state. Additional information about PHCA is available by calling 717-221-1800 or visiting www.phca.org.

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