



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 14, 2007

NEWS

Contact: Alison Everett, 717-608-5463

PHCA Applauds General Assembly for Passing ‘Assisted Living’ Legislation *Measure Will Give Citizens New Level of Long-Term Care*

HARRISBURG --- HARRISBURG --- Dr. Stuart Shapiro, President & CEO of the Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA), a statewide organization that advocates for long-term care for the elderly and disabled, today applauded the General Assembly for enacting legislation that defines "assisted living" and expands consumers' long-term care options.

Gov. Edward G. Rendell is expected to sign SB 704, sponsored by Sen. Pat Vance (R-Cumberland/York). This law, when signed, will expand Pennsylvania's continuum of long-term care by establishing assisted living as a new level of care between personal care homes and nursing homes.

"This legislation is a tremendous victory for Pennsylvanians consumers because it assures that they will have access to a new level of care for those who need assistance with more than personal care, but do not yet need round-the-clock skilled nursing home care," Dr. Shapiro said.

"Every day in Pennsylvania, families are confronted with the difficult and emotional decision of helping to find appropriate long-term care for someone they love," Dr. Shapiro said, noting that the need for long-term care is only going to grow as the baby boomer generation ages. "SB 704 ensures that older or disabled Pennsylvanians receive the right care at the right time in what has become a rapidly evolving and increasingly complex long-term care continuum."

Under current state law, residents who live in personal care homes typically need help with activities of daily living, such as bathing, meals and help with medications, but do not need health care services. Nursing homes, conversely, serve the other end of the spectrum, providing 24/7 skilled nursing for the frailest of the population. Assisted living will provide a level of care between the two.

Pennsylvania is expected to seek federal approval to allow some Medicaid-funded individuals to reside in assisted living facilities.

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.

PHCA has long advocated for "assisted living" legislation as a way to help the state accommodate the burgeoning ranks of older Pennsylvanians and others in need of personal and health care assistance in daily life.

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 60,000 elderly and disabled individuals across the state. Additional information about PHCA is available by calling 717-221-1800 or visiting www.phca.org.

###