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July 25, 2007

NEWS

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PHCA Applauds Enactment of ‘Assisted Living’ Legislation
Measure Gives Citizens New Level of Long-Term Care

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, said Pennsylvania residents will have a new choice of long-term care thanks to legislation signed into law today by Governor Edward G. Rendell.

“Today marks 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. “This legislation is a testament to the care and consideration our Governor and General Assembly pay to our most vulnerable citizens, and is a real demonstration of how bipartisanship can benefit consumers.”

Gov. Rendell signed SB 704, sponsored by Sen. Pat Vance (R-Cumberland/York). The new legislation expands Pennsylvania’s continuum of long-term care by establishing assisted living as a new level of care between personal care homes and nursing homes.

Dr. Shapiro said that 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.

“The need for long-term care is only going to grow as baby boomers reach retirement age,” Dr. Shapiro said. “This legislation ensures that older and disabled Pennsylvanians receive the right care at the right time in the right place 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 most frail 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.

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