Chronic Care Management Training for Home Health Professionals Focus of New Partnership

(February 23, 2010) Harrisburg, Pa. – Recognizing the growing need to manage chronic conditions to reduce costly hospitalizations and emergency room use, the Pennsylvania Homecare Association (PHA) today announced a partnership with the HealthSciences Institute to offer a Chronic Care Professional (CCP) certification program for home health clinicians.

The certification and advanced chronic care training comes at a critical time for the home health industry as an increasing number of patients are being diagnosed with and treated for two or more chronic conditions; the chronic care management model is being retooled to focus on patient education and self-management; and, more emphasis is being placed on cost containment.

Today, 7.8 million Pennsylvanians – more than 60 percent of the state’s population – suffer from chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. This high incidence places Pennsylvania 45th in the nation for chronic diseases. The economic impact of chronic disease on the Commonwealth due to productivity loss and treatments accounted for $50.3 billion in economic loss in 2003 and the cost of treatment alone, including the secondary health issues that occur with those diseases, totaled $13.6 billion.

In response, Governor Edward G. Rendell in 2007 established a Chronic Care Management, Reimbursement and Cost Reduction Commission which embarked on a demonstration project with physicians in all regions of the Commonwealth. As part of the demonstration, physicians are partnering with chronic care managers to extend and improve patient care – a role the home health industry argues it is uniquely positioned to fill.

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“Managing patients with chronic conditions in the home is an organic component of care provided by home health nurses and clinicians, and it has been for years, since the early days of the visiting nurse model of care,” said PHA Executive Director Vicki Hoak. “Home health already has in place evidence-based guidelines, a quality care reporting structure and is proven to reduce avoidable hospitalizations and lower costs.”

According to Hoak, the formal 40-hour, online CCP learning program includes a competency-based chronic care improvement curriculum as well as skill-building in evidence-based approaches such as motivational interviewing, which has been identified by chronic care experts as an essential pillar of increasing patient self-awareness and motivating patients to better manage their health. CCP is the only nationally-recognized professional training and certification program in health coaching, chronic care improvement and care management.

“The certification brings formal training to these frontline home health professionals who are treating a growing number of patients with chronic conditions. We believe providers of in-home health care and personal care are best equipped to manage these patients since they are right there with them in the home where they can see how the patient manages – or mismanage – their own health.”

“We’re very pleased to be partnering with PHA and joining in Pennsylvania’s initiative to deliver better chronic care to Pennsylvanian’s,” said Dr. Blake Anderson, President and CEO of HealthSciences Institute. “Chronic care is widely recognized as a new model of care that requires new competencies. And most chronic care is self-care and occurs at home. A number of studies have shown that clinicians specifically trained in evidence-based, formal approaches to treatment and treatment adherence, as well as self-care and lifestyle management support, deliver better patient and cost-related outcomes.”

The certification is offered at a discount to members of PHA but is open to all home health and personal care professionals. For more information, 

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**About PHA:** The Pennsylvania Homecare Association is a statewide organization of homecare and hospice providers. PHA members, some 400 strong, provide quality care and serve as advocates for their patients and clients on a variety of healthcare related issues. PHA and its members work hard to improve professional standards and ensure access to quality homecare throughout the Commonwealth.

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