



For Immediate Release

Media Contact

Christine Tondrick, Communications Director
Pennsylvania Homecare Association
(800) 382-1211 ext. 22
(717) 712-9807 – mobile
ctondrick@pahomecare.org

Pennsylvania Homecare Association to Governor Rendell: Keep Seniors Safe and License Homecare Agencies

Harrisburg, Pa. (August 10, 2009) – In a letter delivered today to Governor Edward G. Rendell, the Pennsylvania Homecare Association (PHA) called for his immediate action to finalize regulations that would license some 600 homecare agencies. In 2006, the state legislature passed and the Governor signed Act 69 to license homecare agencies and homecare registries but has yet to finalize the regulations.

PHA Executive Director Vicki Hoak said while the industry has done a great job with self-regulation, standards for care must be in place and the Governor’s unwillingness to take action puts the safety of Pennsylvania seniors at risk. “The state licenses barbers, manicurists and ATV vehicles. Don’t our seniors deserve the same protections?” wrote Hoak.

Under new regulations, the PA Department of Health would oversee state inspections of homecare providers that provide non-medical care in people’s homes such as assistance with bathing, grooming and transportation – services that PHA says enable the aging population to remain at home where they want to be.

“For several years now, the Rendell Administration has focused much attention on re-balancing the long-term care system and has pledged full support for shifting more emphasis to home and community-based care but there is a troubling disconnect between intent and action,” said Hoak adding that the industry supports licensure and has experienced none of the proverbial “bumps in the road” that most industries encounter with regulations.

-more-

Licensure regulations would require that homecare agencies and home care registries, at a minimum:

- Conduct criminal background checks on employees
- Conduct TB screens for all staff and contractors with direct consumer contact
- Ensure all staff or contractors have ONE of the following:
 - A valid nurse's license
 - Successfully completed
 - A nurse aide training program approved by the state
 - A home health aide training program approved by the state
 - A personal care training program approved by the state
 - A competency examination for persons only providing ADL (Activities of Daily Living) or IADL (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living)

The letter was sent today because in exactly one month the deadline to finalize the next phase of homecare licensure regulations will expire. If the regulations are not submitted and reviewed by House and Senate committees and the Independent Regulatory Review Council by September 11, the process of promulgating the regulations must begin over again.

As each day passes, Hoak says, “The safety of our seniors is at stake.”

About the Pennsylvania Homecare Association

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.

###

For a copy of the Pennsylvania Homecare Association’s letter to Governor Rendell, please contact PHA Communications Director Christine Tondrick at 717-975-9448 ext. 22 or ctondrick@pahomecare.org.