



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact

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

New State Law Mandates Licensing of Homecare Agencies

Harrisburg – After a nearly 15-year effort by the Pennsylvania Homecare Association (PHA), homecare agencies must now be licensed to operate in the Commonwealth. Governor Ed Rendell and the Department of Health on Saturday made licensing of homecare agencies and registries mandatory with the publication of regulations in the December 12 *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Homecare agencies and registries now have 60 days to file an application for license with the Department of Health.

The licensing of homecare agencies and registries amended the Pennsylvania Health Care Facilities Act and mandates that all homecare agencies and registries conduct criminal background checks of workers, verify worker training, conduct TB testing, report adverse events to the Department of Health and require workers to wear ID badges.

According to PHA, the licensure legislation promotes consumer control and validates that homecare is a critical component of today's health care system.

“This is a significant milestone for the state's homecare industry,” said PHA executive director Vicki Hoak. “Homecare agencies now have similar status within the health care system as hospitals, nursing homes, home health and hospice agencies.”

Hoak said the new regulations also afford Pennsylvanians who receive in-home personal care services, additional consumer protections by establishing an industry standard of care along with baseline requirements for staff competency and training.

-more-

It is estimated that of the 750,000 Pennsylvanians who receive in-home care each year, more than one third receive personal care services such as assistance with bathing, meal preparation and transportation.

As the need for homecare services increases, so too will the number of agencies, in response to market demand and consumer choice. Approximately 15 percent of Pennsylvania's population is 65 and older and the 85 and older population is projected to double by 2020. The PA Department of Health estimates that there are currently 600 homecare agencies and registries operating in Pennsylvania.

"The majority of people will need personal care services for themselves or a loved one in their lifetime," said Hoak. "More people are choosing to be cared for at home and they should be afforded protections."

About PHA: *The Pennsylvania Homecare Association is a statewide organization of homecare and hospice providers. PHA members, some 300 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.*

12.14.09