



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

#### **Media Contact**

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

## **People with Disabilities and Older Pennsylvanians Oppose New State Agency Regulating Caregivers**

*Consumer Workforce Council threatens consumers' authority to manage caregivers  
and their ability to choose the homecare workers they want*

**HARRISBURG** – People with disabilities and older Pennsylvanians who employ homecare workers are concerned about a proposal to create a state-run homecare agency, the Consumer Workforce Council (CWC), which hurts their ability to choose the caregiver they want and creates mandates on how homecare workers are managed.

“This is an unwanted government intrusion that affects my ability to choose and manage my homecare workers,” said Keith Williams, a community organizer for the Northeast PA Center for Independent Living, who has employed attendants to assist him with activities of daily living since 1988.

*-more-*

Williams said many disabled and older consumers hire relatives, neighbors or friends as caregivers who often have full-time or part-time jobs outside of homecare. Consumers are concerned that their homecare workers would prefer to find another job rather than join a state-run homecare agency, be listed on a statewide registry or be asked to participate in expensive training for multiple clients.

“Since the 1980s, people with disabilities have worked very hard to create a system that gives us the freedom to stay in our homes and manage our needs with our employees. This new state-run homecare agency will take away our freedom and changes our consumer-driven system,” Williams said.

Under a pure consumer-driven model, consumers are empowered to choose their attendant and determine pay rate and salary increases. “Essentially, the consumer has the right to hire, manage, schedule, supervise, discipline and, if necessary, terminate their employees,” said Williams.

Bill Kepner, Vice President of PA Providers Coalition Association, said a statewide registry of homecare workers is unnecessary. The state Department of Labor and Industry already operates more than 60 CareerLink offices across Pennsylvania that lists homecare workers who are available for consumers to hire. The departments of Health and Aging also have lists of homecare agencies by counties on their websites.

“The CWC is another example of a government answer to a problem that doesn’t exist,” Kepner said. “Consumers don’t need the red tape. They need more funding for vital services.” He also added, “On the issue of better wages and benefits for direct care workers, all parties agree that those who provide care in the home deserve more. Let’s make that happen through COLA increases and better access to AdultBasic, but creating a Consumer Workforce Council is not the answer.”

*-more-*

In the past, disabled and older consumers fought hard to exempt their homecare workers from the state homecare licensure regulations, giving consumers freedom to choose and manage their workers to meet their needs. Workers on the statewide CWC registry would be subject to the state mandated regulations.

Vicki Hoak, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Homecare Association, noted that there are nearly 800 home and community-based providers in Pennsylvania. The CWC creates a state-run, state-funded agency that would compete with consumers and private agencies. This unfair competition could result in the elimination of competition in the marketplace, and, in turn, less choice and access for consumers.

“Consumers deserve to choose which workers they want to hire and which agency they want to use. Creating a state-run agency will eventually result in less freedom for consumers and less competition in the marketplace,” Hoak said. “It will also result in higher costs for state and county governments, fees for homecare workers and no oversight of care.”

County commissioners are being asked to sign intergovernmental agreements to establish pilot projects. The Coalition for R.E.A.L. (Respected, Empowered, Accessible, Loyal) Home and Community-Based Services in Pennsylvania is comprised of 27 organizations that oppose the CWC. The Coalition prefers that the General Assembly consider the issue, including ordering a fiscal note on the cost of creating the new state-run agency. The Senate Aging & Youth and Senate Labor & Industry committees have scheduled an informational hearing on the issue for April 28 in Harrisburg.

***Coalition for R.E.A.L. (Respected, Empowered, Accessible, Loyal) Home and Community-Based Services in Pennsylvania represents homecare providers, Centers for Independent Living and other senior and disability advocacy organizations. For more information, go to***

***[www.realinhomecarepa.com](http://www.realinhomecarepa.com)***

###

