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NEWS RELEASE

PHA Members Discuss In-Home Care Before House Aging & Older Adult Committee

Lemoine, Pa. (May 25, 2016) – The House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee held an informational hearing today at the state Capitol to learn more about in-home care services, including private duty homecare, home health and hospice. Testimony was provided by PHA CEO Vicki Hoak; President-Elect Pattie Rodgers, Vice President & Director of Operations, Waverly Care Associates; and Nancy Conklin, RN, Clinical Operations Manager, Celtic Healthcare.

“For elected officials as a whole, the topic of aging is still not something we hear a lot about from our candidates, especially during political debates. Yet the aging of our society is just as deserving of our attention as unemployment rates, job creation or gun control,” said PHA CEO Vicki Hoak in her testimony. “We come into our patients and clients’ worlds – they don’t come to us for an appointment. We knock on their doors, come into their living rooms or bedrooms and provide the care they need to remain at home. Until recently, people died swiftly and relatively young of infectious diseases, accidents or in childbirth. As a result of modern medicine and public health we have managed to prolong the lifespan, but we have done far too little to extend the HEALTHSPAN.”

Conklin outlined some of the barriers to receiving care at home. “Home health is under constant scrutiny by the many state and federal regulations we must adhere to, and new rules are created every day,” she testified. “Five percent of the most seriously ill Americans account for greater than 50% of all healthcare dollars spent each year. Yet we might wait days and sometimes weeks to get authorization from physicians to visit patients. Sometimes the authorization simply doesn’t cover everything the patient needs. What do you do when you are given five visits and after five visits the patient still needs someone to dress their wound, or drain their chest tube, but the insurance company hasn’t responded to your request for more time?”

Rodgers illustrated the importance of homecare by telling the story of Amina, a 59-year-old retired physician with Multiple Sclerosis, who is able to remain in her home with her husband where her two married sons and their young children come for extended visits from across the country. “Her caregiver, Francyne, comes to her house four days a week for four or five hours to help Amina shower, dress her, exercise with her, and be her arms and legs in the kitchen where Amina so loves to direct the cooking. Francyne drives Amina to appointments, errands, or just to take in a movie... a bit of normalcy in her topsy turvy world,” Rodgers testified. “Francyne provides much needed companionship where Amina can safely share her fears and frustrations. They laugh together, they lament about the political arena together. Amina looks forward to Francyne’s visits.”

She also addressed the barriers to homecare. “While these stories point out the need for personal care assistance, many times families don’t get the help they need soon enough and as a result their mothers or fathers decline quickly. As a homecare professional, I always stress that as soon as an issue is apparent – the house is not kept like it once was, or walking is becoming more of a struggle – it is time to have a professional do an assessment. Keep in mind that one to two hours of personal assistance services can make a huge difference as well as help to keep your loved one safe and at home,” Rodgers said.

Photo: [Click here to download a photo from the hearing.](#)

Caption: (Left to right) Vicki Hoak, PHA CEO; Pattie Rodgers, PHA President-Elect and Vice President & Director of Operations, Waverly Care Associates; Rep. Steve Samuelson, Minority Chair, House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee; Rep. Tim Hennessey, Chair, House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee; and Nancy Conklin, RN, Clinical Operations Manager, Celtic Healthcare.

About PHA... The Pennsylvania Homecare Association is a statewide organization of more than 700 homecare and hospice providers. PHA members 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. To learn more, visit www.pahomecare.org.

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