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NEWS RELEASE

Open the Door to Care at Home: Nearly 350 In-Home Care Providers Stand Up for Access to Care and Safety at Home

Lemoyno, Pa. (May 17, 2016) – Nearly 350 providers of in-home care to seniors, adults with disabilities and children with complex medical conditions converged upon the state Capitol in Harrisburg today to meet with most of Pennsylvania’s 253 state lawmakers. Wearing large, gold keys around their necks to symbolize opening the door to care at home, providers and legislators discussed how important it is for all Pennsylvanians to have the right to choose in-home care.

“We are here today on behalf of the thousands of Pennsylvanians, from the very young to the very old, who choose care at home,” said Vicki Hoak, PHA CEO. “There are several issues in play right now that could be ‘make or break’ for the homecare industry and for the seniors, children and people with disabilities who we are able to keep safe at home, with their families, where they belong. Without fair income calculation for many individuals who are just beyond the Medicaid income limit, without clearly defined guidelines for hiring caregivers with criminal records, and without adequate reimbursement for services provided in the home, access to care at home could be threatened.”

The Issues:

- The 2015-16 state budget and fiscal code included a \$5 increase for in-home pediatric shift nursing. However, providers cannot realize this increase without the Department of Human Services directing managed care companies to increase their provider rates. [Click here](#) for more information.
- The door to Medicaid in-home care is still closed to some seniors and adults with disabilities because their income is over the monthly limit of \$2,199. Part of the income calculation includes approximately \$200, which comes out of people’s Social Security checks to pay for Medicare premiums. People never actually see this money, yet it puts some people over the income limit for Medicaid-funded services. [Click here](#) for a fact sheet urging the state to disregard the approximately \$200 from countable income so that more people can be eligible for Medicaid in-home care.
- The Older Adult Protective Services Act (OAPSA) requires all homecare agency employees to complete criminal background checks prior to hire. If an applicant has a prior conviction for a prohibitive offense, he or she cannot be hired. However in December 2015, the Commonwealth Court found the lifetime employment ban was unconstitutional. So there is currently no guidance on how to proceed when applicants have convictions on the now obsolete prohibitive list. [Click here](#) for a fact sheet on proposed principles for defining the employment bans.
- Current Medicaid reimbursement for homecare agencies, which ranges from \$17.52 to \$19.52 per hour depending on the geographic location of the agency is woefully inadequate and does not cover the actual cost of providing care to people in their homes. [Click here](#) for a fact sheet on the need for fair reimbursement for Medicaid in-home services.

About PHA... *The Pennsylvania Homecare Association is a statewide organization of more than 700 homecare, home health 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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