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NEWS RELEASE

PHA President Testifies Before House Aging Committee, Urges Action on Bill to Protect Seniors at Home

Harrisburg, Pa. (September 5, 2018) – Today Patricia Rodgers, Vice President and Director of Operations at Waverly Care Associates in Gladwyne and President of the Pennsylvania Homecare Association (PHA) Board of Directors, testified before at a House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee hearing on proposed legislation to update the Older Adult Protective Services Act.

In 2015, a Commonwealth Court decision (*Peake v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*) found lifetime employment bans in the Older Adults Protective Services Act (OAPSA) unconstitutional. Following this decision, PHA convened a group of stakeholders to develop guidelines and preliminary language for legislation to correct this, since providers were now hiring caregivers without guidance from the state about employing individuals with criminal convictions. Two bills were introduced to remedy the issue. Chairman Tim Hennessey (R-26) introduced House Bill 2549 and Sen. Bob Mensch (R-24) introduced Senate Bill 899.

At the hearing today on House Bill 2549, Rodgers said the legislature is long overdue in reinstating OAPSA. “Homecare is one-to-one care,” Rodgers said. “It involves two people: a homecare professional, which could be an aide, nurse, social worker, or therapist, and a patient, client or consumer who needs care in order to stay at home.

“So often, our homecare aides are lifelines for the individuals they serve and we must ensure that they are qualified and competent to deliver this essential and very personal care in private homes,” she added. “Having strong, concise and effective guidance in OAPSA will help support agencies’ goals of keeping that person safe at home. To accomplish this, it is very important to make sure this legislation provides the necessary protections, while respecting and recognizing an individual’s rehabilitation and right to work.”

“I thank Chairman Hennessey and the full committee for holding this important hearing,” Rodgers said. “There are less than 10 legislative session days left before the end of the year, and with the election in November and other legislative priorities, we are worried that this important bill will fall to the bottom of the priority list. Older Pennsylvanians deserve better, and I encourage our lawmakers to put them at the top of the priority list.”

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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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