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NEWS RELEASE

Verneil “Ric” Williams of Extended Family Care Named 2018 Pennsylvania Direct Care Worker of the Year

Harrisburg, Pa. (March 28, 2018) – Verneil “Ric” Williams, a home health aide with Extended Family Care in Pittsburgh, has been named the 2018 Pennsylvania Direct Care Worker of the year. Williams was recognized today among nearly 200 of his peers at the second annual Direct Care Worker Forum in Harrisburg, organized by the Pennsylvania Homecare Association (PHA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA).

Williams has been an aide with Extended Family Care for nearly 20 years. According to Laura Partridge, Business Development Manager with the agency who nominated him for the award, Williams has provided care to more than 75 diverse Pennsylvanians and has earned the respect of clients, families and co-workers due to his loyalty and commitment to provide compassionate, client-centered, quality care.

“Ric’s willingness to travel, upbeat personality and cheery disposition provide hope, positivity and a sense of calming previously uncommon to the unique consumers he serves,” Partridge said in her nomination of Williams. “Ric is often able to brighten their day with his positivity, demonstration of respect for their diversity and compassion and empathy in knowing that they need his help.

“Ric continues to treat his clients as if they were his own family,” she added. “He is compassionate, reliable, respectful, professional, and humble. He is an advocate for his clients and a role model to his peers.”

Pennsylvania is home to more than 12.8 million residents. Of these, approximately 2.9 million are adults age 60 and older, and more than 300,000 are aged 85 and older. By 2020, the population of older Pennsylvanians is projected to increase by 25%, and the population of Pennsylvanians aged 80 and over is projected to increase by 20,000 individuals. To help ensure that Pennsylvania’s direct care workforce is ready to meet these challenges head-on, Williams has served as a Home Health Aide Mentor to train up-and-coming aides. He has also participated in care conferences, focus groups and in-service discussions to make improvements in the lives of others and the care that is delivered at home. During a previous grant-funded initiative, Williams participated in an initiative that provided a financial incentive to a select group of aides to further their careers in nursing and with their agency.

Williams was selected from a record number of nominees this year – 195. All nominees received a stipend to attend the Forum today, which featured lunch, and educational workshop, and the

presentation of the award to Williams by Secretary of Aging Teresa Osborne. He also received a \$1,000 cash prize from PHA's Foundation for Home Care and Hospice.

“Direct care workers are essential to the delivery of long-term care services and supports in Pennsylvania,” said Secretary of Aging Teresa Osborne. “Today provided the Wolf Administration, in partnership with PHA, the opportunity to gather with an amazing group of direct care workers who every day provide critical services and supports that enable the older Pennsylvanians entrusted to their care to live with independence and dignity. While they rarely receive the recognition they deserve, the direct care workers honored today serve as a model for others who choose this profession.”

“Direct care workers are the unsung heroes of home-based care,” said PHA CEO Vicki Hoak. “They provide vital lifelines to the seniors they serve. They act as the eyes and ears of their consumers and can recognize a change in condition and help to prevent avoidable hospitalizations. They deserve the recognition they received today, and so much more.”

[Click here](#) to view a full list of the 2018 Direct Care Worker Award nominees.

[Click here](#) to download a photo.

Caption: The Honorable Teresa Osborne, Secretary of Aging; 2018 Direct Care Worker of the Year Verneil “Ric” Williams; Vicki Hoak, CEO, Pennsylvania Homecare Association.

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