



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT

Pa. Homecare Association CEO Comments on Governor's Proposed 2017-18 Budget

Lemoyne, Pa. (February 9, 2017) – Vicki Hoak, CEO of the Pennsylvania Homecare Association (PHA), issued the following statement in response to Gov. Tom Wolf's 2017-18 proposed \$32.3 billion budget:

“During his brief budget address earlier this week, Governor Tom Wolf mentioned seniors, aging and home nearly 20 times, emphasizing his commitment to enabling more seniors to receive services at home rather than in a nursing home. The Pennsylvania Homecare Association, which represents nearly 700 homecare and hospice agencies that bring medical, personal and end-of-life care into the homes of thousands each week across the state, applauds the Governor for making older Pennsylvanians a priority and protecting the investment Pennsylvania has already made in senior services.

“The Governor has publicly recognized the value of our direct care workforce, who are lifelines for seniors and people with disabilities. However despite this increased focus, current Medicaid reimbursement is still woefully inadequate and makes it difficult for providers to cover their expenses and provide direct care workers with livable wages. We are disappointed that there was no rate increase for personal assistance services in the Governor's budget.

“Homecare providers can care for two people at home for the same cost as just one person in a nursing home. Paying \$2,102 per month for 30 hours of personal assistance services is much cheaper than the \$5,390 a month that Medicaid pays today for a nursing home. Homecare is a win-win for both state government and consumers. At a fraction of the cost of nursing home care, home-based care saves Medicaid significant dollars AND being at home is simply where people want to be. Yet, the Governor didn't address the difficulty older Pennsylvanians and their families have in accessing home-based care. Today, it can take anywhere from four to six months for an individual to complete the eligibility determination process before Medicaid will begin to pay for home-based care. Yet someone who goes into a nursing facility can immediately be 'presumed Medicaid eligible' by a quick look at checking accounts and other assets. Why such differences in Medicaid rules? Because when the Medicaid program was first created in 1965, the government was focused on nursing homes. But today we have many other options that can instead help people remain as independent as possible at home.

“We appreciate Governor Wolf's commitment to older Pennsylvanians but urge him to look at current archaic Medicaid rules that are barriers for many seniors who want to remain at home.”

***About PHA...** The Pennsylvania Homecare Association is a statewide organization of nearly 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.*

###

Contact:

Jennifer Haggerty
(717) 975-9448, ext. 22
jhaggerty@pahomecare.org