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PHCA Demands Department of Health Correct Long-Term Care Public Data

Shamberg: "The state owes it to our most vulnerable residents, our healthcare heroes, and our providers of care to get this right."

HARRISBURG, PA (May 21, 2020) – Just two days after the Pennsylvania Department of Health first publicly reported facility-specific COVID-19 data for nursing homes, personal care homes and assisted living communities, Zach Shamberg, president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Health Care Association, released the following statement urging the Department of Health and the Wolf Administration to immediately correct the inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the flawed report:

"On Tuesday, May 19th, the Pennsylvania Department of Health began publicly reporting facility-specific COVID-19 data for nursing homes, personal care homes, assisted living communities and other providers.

"Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, PHCA members have supported transparency and communication, and we have led the charge to publicly post this information.

"However, minutes after the data was published, it became clear it contained inconsistent and inaccurate information about many providers. The posted data simply did not match with providers' actual experiences with COVID-19, the information that they have shared with families, residents and staff, or the data they had already submitted to the Department of Health.

"For several weeks, long-term care providers and staff have remained in close communication with the family members and loved ones of their residents, providing information on COVID-19 illnesses and deaths that may have occurred. As visitation has been restricted, they have worked to build trust between those caring for their residents, and those concerned for their health and wellbeing.

"On Tuesday, for many providers, frontline staff and families, that trust was broken.

“The Department’s posting of this inaccurate data has created panic and anger amongst family members, distrust amongst staff and frustration for providers.

“PHCA has spoken with the Department of Health, as well as the Governor’s Office, and they have admitted the data is incorrect. We have demanded that the flawed data be taken down from public view immediately and that accurate, verifiable data be posted. We have committed to work with the Department of Health in this effort to get the data right.

“While the public has overwhelmingly demanded the disclosure of this data, it is imperative that the Department provide facts, not fiction, when reporting on the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Department of Health has not provided a plausible explanation for why it will not remove faulty data or alert the public that the posted data is inaccurate. We have advised the Department of Health that if it does not immediately take action to remove information it knows to be wrong, we will be forced to explore all options, including possible legal action in Commonwealth Court, to get truthful data posted as soon as possible.

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About the Pennsylvania Health Care Association

The Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA) is a statewide advocacy organization for Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable residents and their providers of care. Our members include for-profit and nonprofit skilled nursing facilities, personal care homes and assisted living residences.

Together, we represent more than 500 long-term care and senior service providers and more than 50,000 elderly and disabled individuals. For more information, please call 717-221-7935 or visit phca.org.