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OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

Home Health Services  
by The Thorne Group, Inc.  
235 West Pittsburgh St.  
Greensburg, PA 15601

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SEP - 5 2007

PA DEPT OF HEALTH  
DIVISION OF HOME HEALTH

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2007 SEP 12 AM 9:10  
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
BOARD COMMISSION

August 29, 2007

Janice Staloski, Director  
Pennsylvania Department of Health  
Bureau of Community Program Licensure and Certification  
132 Kline Plaza  
Suite A  
Harrisburg, PA 17104-1579

Dear Ms. Staloski,

These comments are in regards to the final draft regulations by the Department of Health Care Facilities Act providing for the licensure of home care agencies and home care registries. We have worked closely with the Pennsylvania Homecare Association over the past several years advocating the establishment of minimum standards for private duty licensure. We believe these standards are necessary to provide sufficient consumer protection.

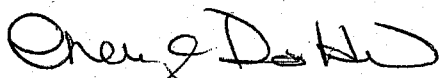
As you know, Home Health Services by the Thorne Group provides skilled services as well as private duty services. As a Medicare certified agency, we already meet most of the proposed standards. However, I do have three concerns:

1. **611.53. Child Abuse Clearance.** I agree all direct care workers who come in contact with children must have child abuse clearances. I do not believe office personnel, owners, and workers not having contact with children should be required to have these clearances. We have only provided private duty services for children a few times. For these cases we did send direct care workers that had child abuse clearances. We have approximately 20 direct care workers with child abuse clearances. Our agency employs 146 people. If we are forced to obtain child abuse clearances on all employees, we will be forced to amend our policy and not accept consumers under the age of 18. Of course we currently obtain criminal background checks on all employees.

2. **611.55. Training requirements.** I agree with the previous version of the draft regulations recommending Subsection 1-9 as required being a part of the competency exam/training program. The Department could then state after subsection (9) "The training program and competency exam, to be approved by the Department, also must include options for additional training or testing to ensure competency in the following subject areas". We have private duty patients that receive only IADLs such, as housekeeping, chore service, and shopping. Consequently, we have employees who do only these types of services and do not perform any type of ADL or personal care services. These employees would not accept consumers requiring personal care or ADL services. It is not necessary or cost effective to require these employees to complete this competency training.
3. **611.57. Consumers protections.** Although the information is usually provided prior to the commencement of services, occasionally it is necessary to provide this information over the phone. The most frequent example is the family member out of state requesting service for a loved one suddenly discharged from the hospital. It may be necessary to begin service immediately for the safety of the patient. In these rare occurrences, we complete the information packet with 2-3 days and furnish the completed packet to the patient and/or family member.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Dott R.N. M.Ed.  
Administrator