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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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DEC 07 2010

December 3, 2010

Ms. Yvette Sanchez-Roberts
Bureau of Policy & Strategic Planning
Department of Public Welfare/Department of Aging
Office of Long-Term Living
555 Walnut Street Forum Place, 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1919

Ref: _____

Dear Ms. Sanchez-Roberts:

I am writing this letter to extend my full support for the Department of Public Welfare's pending rulemaking which would allow Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CRCC) to access Medicaid (MA) Certified beds under limited circumstances.

In many states, including Pennsylvania, place restrictions on MA growth by restricting access to beds on a facility-by-facility basis. The Department of Public Welfare's current policy on long term care places a moratorium on nursing homes who propose to add new MA beds or even those who seek to become MA certified. In many cases, senior citizens, who are already on a fixed income, exhaust all of their assets in order to reside at a Continuing Care Retirement Community. If the Continuing Care Retirement Community is deemed a "closed campus" and has no MA certified beds or needs additional MA beds, because of the moratorium, the senior is forced to leave his or her home. I strongly believe that seniors with limited resources should have access to MA benefits at the Continuing Care Retirement Communities.

I personally request your full attention to the issue. Throughout my years representing the 29th Legislative District, I have made many visits to Ann's Choice Retirement Community, which is literally in my back yard. Ann's Choice is unlike many Retirement Communities. Residents who reside at Ann's Choice have the benefit of going from the assisted retirement community to the long term care unit within without leaving the neighborhood. Residents enjoy the socio-emotional and health benefits of aging all in one place. The Department of Public Welfare's proposed rulemaking is essential to this beautiful community's long term care unit. At the long term care unit, Ann's Choice residents have access to quality health care without the hassle of relocating to a new facility for care.

I would appreciate your favorable consideration of this ruling. The department's proposed rulemaking will create jobs, support major construction projects, create a more favorable business climate and ensure Ann's Choice residents long term well being and continued care. Please feel free to contact my office at 215-441-2624 if you have any questions or concerns that I can answer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "B. O'Neill".

Representative Bernie O'Neill
PA House of Representatives
29th Legislative District
Bucks County

BTO/jeb

cc: Scott Sawicki, Erickson Living Communities

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