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## **Gov. Wolf Announces \$53 Million in Additional Support for Child Care Providers**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Governor Tom Wolf visited the child care center at PSECU headquarters in Harrisburg today to announce \$53 million in additional financial support for child care providers that have suffered during COVID-19.

“This funding will help child care providers bridge the gap until their clientele returns,” Gov. Wolf said. “It will also help them with any increased costs that have been incurred due to the pandemic – things like cleaning and sanitization, which will help keep the 386,000 children who attend our licensed child care facilities safe, as well as the workers who do so much to care for them.”

The governor was joined at the announcement by Teresa Miller, secretary of the Department of Human Services; George Rudolph, president and CEO of PSECU; and Tonya Bastinelli, director of the Bright Horizons child care center at PSECU.

In June, the Wolf Administration distributed \$51 million in CARES Act Child Care Development Funds to eligible child care providers. The \$53 million announced today is also from CARES Act funding and will be distributed this month. Another \$116 million from Act 24 will be distributed in the coming months, bringing the total sum of financial support to \$220 million.

The funding is distributed through the Department of Human Services’ (DHS) Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), which licenses child care providers in the state and is working with Penn State Harrisburg’s Institute of State and Regional Affairs on an impact study to understand challenges for child care providers reopening and resuming operations during COVID-19.

OCDEL has 7,017 licensed child care providers as of June 24 and 65 have permanently closed based on the February 2020 license list. Based on participation in the June CARES Act

distribution, slightly more than 100 additional providers have declined funds indicating they intend to remain closed.

The Penn State study highlights the various operational and financial impacts child care providers have endured and will continue to endure throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the preliminary findings of the study, distributing stimulus funds in July is critical to ensure adequate capacity is available in the future. Data collected through this study will be used to help determine allocation of the remaining \$116 million.

“While we do not know how this pandemic will look in a week, a month, or a year, we know that a healthy, robust child care system will be critical to weather the economic recovery ahead,” DHS Sec. Teresa Miller said. “This study will capture experiences and challenges child care providers have endured since COVID-19 arose in Pennsylvania and will allow us to direct additional funds how and where our child care providers need them most. This industry is vital to both a healthy economy and our children’s futures, and we will not abandon our child care providers who dedicate their lives to our youngest Pennsylvanians, often at low pay and now, a risk to their health. We will be with you through the challenges to come.”

“Fortunately, we’ve been able to keep our childcare center open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic,” said George Rudolph, president and CEO of PSECU. “This is so important because many of the parents who use this service are essential workers. By keeping the doors open, we’ve been able to provide a valuable service to our local heroes that has allowed them to continue working. For PSECU, this childcare center represents one of the many ways that we’re able to support the strength and well-being of our members and the local community.”

“Stable, affordable, high-quality child care is an important piece of our workforce development,” Gov. Wolf said. “In fact, my Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center identified it as one of the biggest hurdles to getting more Pennsylvanians into the workforce. As we continue to recover economically from this pandemic, we will need child care available so parents can resume working, or so they can attend training programs or job interviews. And, of course, it is crucial to continue providing high-quality care during critical early years when children are rapidly learning.”

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