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Department of Human Services, WellSpan Health visit Personal Care Home to Highlight Need for Continued Investment in Pennsylvania's Long-Term Care System

York, PA –Department of Human Services (DHS) Acting Secretary Meg Snead and WellSpan Health Vice President of Community Health and Engagement Ann Kunkel today visited Hunter Cottage in York to talk about the importance of increasing investments in personal care homes (PCH) as outlined in the Governor's proposed budget.

PCHs support the broader long-term care and health care systems by providing safe housing and assistance to older people and people with disabilities who need help with daily tasks, but who do not need acute or long-term medical care.

"Personal care homes provide invaluable services by allowing residents who may need help with daily living remain in their communities and closer to family, friends, and neighbors," said Acting Secretary Snead. "Personal care homes are a vital community-based service, and now is the time for the commonwealth to increase its investment in caring for our seniors and people with disabilities."

PCHs are residences that provide housing, meals, supervision, and assistance with personal care tasks, for individuals who are unable to care for themselves but do not need nursing home or medical care. PCHs are licensed and inspected annually by DHS.

Governor Tom Wolf's proposed budget includes increasing the PCH supplement, which is an investment in quality of care and life for Pennsylvanians who call these facilities home and the staff that provide daily care. Supplemental monthly payments help meet the cost of personal care services for Social Security Income recipients in personal care homes. These homes receive a supplemental payment because residents have very low incomes and limited ability to pay for care. This often leaves facilities that serve this population operating with limited resources. Increasing the payments to PCHs as proposed in Governor Wolf's budget will move the rate from \$37 per day to \$76 per day. The PCH supplement has not increased since 2006.

"I've seen with my own eyes, on too many occasions, what happens to these residents – our neighbors – when these homes close," said Ann Kunkel, WellSpan Health Vice President of Community Health and Engagement. "They're forced to move to the

nearest home that has room available and accept the low-income supplement – which is often several counties away. All of this away from the family, friends and community they’ve known for years or decades.”

PCHs are an important part of the long-term care infrastructure, and like so many sectors of the caring workforce, PCHs have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although they are not a medical model of care, the congregate setting and age of people residing in these facilities created great challenges through the most difficult months of the pandemic.

The Wolf Administration worked quickly in the early weeks of the pandemic to support these facilities as they adjusted operations and worked to keep residents and staff safe while continuing care. Since April 2020, the departments of Human Services (DHS) and Health (DOH) have partnered with the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, numerous health systems, and public health partners to be a resource to long-term care facilities like PCHs and other residential settings serving people with disabilities.

The proposed increased in state funding will allow long-term care providers to invest in their staff, facilities, and infection control to support better care and safety at these homes.

For more information on personal care homes, visit [DHS's website](#). DHS's [FY 2022-23 budget](#) is also available online.

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