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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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on Boroughs
STATE GOVERNMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Mauree A. Gingrich

MAY

DATE: August 1, 2011

SUBJECT: Co-sponsor: Sterile Processing Technicians Certification

The level of concern regarding hospital-based infection is rising, particularly as infections become more drug resistant. One of the leading causes of hospital-based infection is the use of medical equipment that has not been properly sterilized. Sterile processing technicians are responsible for sterilizing all durable medical equipment; specifically reusable medical devices used on a daily basis. Many are complicated robotic instruments. The costs for infection treatment, increasing mortality rates and rising liability are putting greater emphasis on prevention.

I will soon be introducing legislation that will require sterile processing technicians in health care facilities to meet specific training and educational requirements as well as create a state certification.

In Pennsylvania, persons responsible for processing and sterilizing surgical equipment are often entry-level employees with little education and training. At present, the Commonwealth does not require sterile processing technicians to be certified or undergo continuing education in sterile processing techniques. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have published guidelines for sterilization and disinfection of health care facilities, the absence of a specific law leaves hospitals to establish their own procedures and results may vary. It is critical that physicians be able to perform surgery without fear of patient safety and that patient's can trust the equipment used will not complicate their circumstances for being hospitalized in the first place.

I believe we have an obligation to the citizens of this Commonwealth to ensure that individuals who work in this capacity are qualified, through both training and competency measures, and certified to prepare and process surgical instrumentation and equipment. If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Nicole Foit in my Harrisburg office at 783-1815 or via email to nfoit@pahousegop.com. I appreciate your support and co-sponsorship. Thank you.