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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING & OLDER ADULT SERVICES
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Minority Chairman - Subcommittee
on Boroughs
STATE GOVERNMENT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: *February 29, 2012*

SUBJECT: *The Central Sterile Technicians Certification Act*

TO: *All House Members*

FROM: *Representative Mauree Gingrich*

I am preparing to introduce legislation that will require all central sterile technicians in health care facilities to obtain certification using national sterile processing standards and to meet continuing education requirements.

The level of concern regarding hospital-based infection is rising, particularly as infections become more drug resistant. One of the challenges with hospital-based infections is the use of medical equipment that has not been properly sterilized. Central sterile supply 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.

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 central sterile supply 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 certified to prepare and process surgical instrumentation and equipment as well as undergo continuing education to maintain up to date sterile processing procedures. If you would like to join me in this effort, please notify Nicole Foit in my Harrisburg office at 783-1815 or nfoit@pahousegop.com. Thank you.