



**Testimony of Secretary Brian Duke, Department of Aging
House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee
October 16, 2013
HB 1702 – The Community Respite Services Program Act**

Good morning, Chairman Hennessey, Chairman Samuelson, Representative Ross and distinguished members of the House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee. I am Secretary of Aging Brian Duke and I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to provide information regarding HB 1702 authorizing the Pennsylvania Department of Aging to develop a Community Respite Services Program.

It is in the best interests of all Pennsylvanians to support policies that help older individuals maintain independence and dignity in their communities while also providing assurance to their loved ones that they are safe. The proposed Community Respite Services Program ties in the Department of Aging's 2012-2016 State Plan on Aging, a goal of which provides Pennsylvanians age 60 or older access to care and services at the right time, in the right setting and at the right intensity. I would like to thank Representative Chris Ross for bringing this issue forward for consideration.

Community Respite Services Programs would provide services for individuals who need more than the normal scope of services offered at senior centers but not the full level of attention provided by licensed Adult Day Centers. HB 1702 will provide senior and adult day centers with the ability to offer a transitional program for participants who are independent but may need some limited assistance with some activities of daily living. These individuals must be able to remain independent in dressing, toileting and eating and drinking skills but may require some limited assistance with simple meal tasks such as the cutting of food.

For the past year, the Department has worked under a task force structure with representatives of the Pennsylvania Adult Day Services Association (PADSA), the Pennsylvania Association of Senior Centers, representatives from the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's) and various adult day and senior centers in southeast Pennsylvania to discuss what a senior center transition program or "Community Respite Program" should entail. The group met and discussed what can be done to establish a program that can provide programming designed to support individuals who may need some simple reminders or redirection that would not jeopardize their health, safety or well-being and allow them to remain independent. We thank the members of the Task Force for their expertise and assistance in developing the recommendations you see being presented in the proposed legislation.

HB 1702 will direct the Department of Aging to establish regulations to license and monitor Community Respite Programs within senior centers or adult day centers offering the program to

qualifying participants. The regulations will be based on the recommendations from the work of the Task Force. The regulations will address client eligibility requirements, the application process, program monitoring, oversight and recordkeeping requirements. In the event an individual becomes ineligible for services, the regulations will spell out a process to transition the individual to another level of service such as in-home services, an adult day care center, assisted living, nursing home care or another available resource.

We are pleased to have worked with the AAA's, Adult Day providers, the Senior Center Community and Representative Ross to develop the proposal you see before you today. The Community Respite Program is an affordable tool that may allow older individuals to maintain independence and dignity in their communities while also providing assurance to their loved ones that they are safe.

The program provides another option for consumers and their families to live well and remain at home for as long as possible.

Thank you for your time today, and I am happy to answer any questions.