



*Your
partner in
bringing care
home*

Testimony
House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee
Vicki M. Hoak
Chief Executive Officer
Pennsylvania Homecare Association
April 10, 2019

Good Morning,

Chairman Marshall, Conklin and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before your committee today. My name is Vicki Hoak, CEO of the Pennsylvania Homecare Association, a state trade association representing more than 700 organizations that bring medical care, by our home health agencies; personal care, provided by non-medical agencies and end of life care provided by our hospices --- all care and support brought into thousands of people's homes everyday across the Commonwealth. I am joining Rebecca May-Cole today to instill in you the importance of lottery funding for thousands of older Pennsylvanians.

HEMECARE SERVICES

At the Pennsylvania Homecare Association, we like to say, "There's No Place Like Home in Pennsylvania" and while our provider members matter most, the people we serve Matter More. Because it is Pennsylvania's growing aging population that has driven the growth of the homecare market.

A personal care/private duty homecare agency provides services that do not require a licensed professional or a physician's prescription. A homecare worker can help a person with activities of daily living (ADLs) like remembering to take medications, preparing meals, transferring from a chair, toilet or bed, bathing, getting dressed, light housekeeping or transportation to and from doctor's appointments. A homecare worker can also provide companionship to an older adult or an adult with a disability - engaging in a favorite hobby, watching movies or simply conversing about their past or the events of the day.

These services are not covered under Medicare but can be paid for privately or through the Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance program. Many individuals are only slightly about the income threshold for the Medicaid Aging Waiver under the Medical Assistance Program. In many other states, these individuals would have to forgo the much-needed homecare services, but in Pennsylvania we have the Lottery OPTIONS Program which provides assistance to older Pennsylvanians who cannot afford these services on their own.

LOTTERY OPTIONS PROGRAM

We are all familiar with lottery commercials with Gus the Groundhog. At the end of every commercial we see the lottery logo and the phrase, "Benefits Older Pennsylvanians. Every Day." In Pennsylvania we can proudly boast that we have the only state-run lottery in the nation that is completely dedicated to funding services for older adults. The lottery is the sole means of access to services for over 27,000 Pennsylvanians.

The OPTIONS program requires that an applicant be a legal Pennsylvania resident, aged 60 years and older, have difficulty with daily functioning, and be willing to provide evidence of their financial income and assets. The financial information is not used for an eligibility determination, but rather to determine the level of cost-sharing. Remember, this program is for those who are in eligible for Medical Assistance, but are lower-income and unable to afford services completely on their own.

Since its inception, the Pennsylvania Lottery has contributed more than \$20 billion to fund programs for the state's aging population – \$250 million in care services for more 15,000 residents in the 2017-18 fiscal year. This funding is provided through block grants that are distributed to Area Agencies on Aging. While this is welcome and wonderful news, skilled gaming terminals threaten the health of the Lottery, which recently issued a release that estimated that skill games have cost them an estimated \$138 million in sales over the past year, adversely affecting senior programs. At the same time the waiting list for the Lottery OPTIONS program currently stands at 3,900. With the need growing, we simply cannot jeopardize the revenue stream that supports so many older Pennsylvanians.

As these unregulated machines are popping up in convenience stores, gas stations, bars and various other places, they often are placed directly next to lottery machines in direct competition with the lottery, displaying signage that says "Pennsylvania Skill Game." Allowing unregulated gaming terminals to undermine these important and valuable programs is unconscionable.

LEGISLATION

Senator Tomlinson is the sponsor of Senate Bill 710 which creates financial deterrents for business owners to aid law enforcement in addressing unsanctioned gambling. It is our hope that this legislation and any House-sponsored legislation will garner support from you and your colleagues. We need to do all that we can to protect our vulnerable aging population. They need our support.