



Contact: Marybeth Williams

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phone: (202) 332-2275 x225

Email: mwilliams@theconsumervoice.org

LONG-TERM CARE CONSUMERS VOICE THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT HOME CARE

New Report Shows: Consumers Are Adamant about Staying At Home; More Funding for Services and Better Pay for Workers Desperately Needed

WASHINGTON, DC, September 7, 2012 – Consumers want to remain in their homes as they age and/or as disability requires them to seek assistance, and they believe increased funding for in-home services and better pay and benefits for direct care workers are necessary to make that possible. These are among the findings of a report released today by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice).

Sarah Wells, Executive Director of the Consumer Voice, said it was striking how adamant consumers are about staying at home. “We knew this was important to consumers but the depth to which they feel this way is extraordinary. One individual told us, ‘My worst day in my home is better than my best day in the nursing home.’” Wells also noted that consumers’ ability to remain at home is dependent upon workers. She shared this statement from an interviewee: “If I could change one thing, I would offer night time workers benefits to keep them around because they have kids and families which makes it very hard for them to continue work. Low levels of pay for the night workers also affect this, causing lots of turnover in workers that I have had over the years.”

The report is part of a three-year home care advocacy initiative of the Consumer Voice, which seeks to understand quality care from a unique perspective; the individual receiving or accessing paid care services and support in their own home. The Consumer Voice conducted interviews, surveys and a national focus group of home care consumers over the course of six months.

As a result of the findings in this report, Consumer Voice calls for several public policy actions: 1) ensure continued funding of critical programs like Medicare and Medicaid, 2) make home and community-based services a mandated Medicaid service, 3) enact policies that increase training, wages and benefits for home care workers, 4) require that consumers have the right to choose their workers and schedules for care and services, 5) carry out background checks on all home health workers and 6) support home care ombudsman demonstration projects. These improvements would go a long way toward enabling consumers to receive additional hours of in-home care support, have flexibility with and choice in the worker(s) that come into their homes, be active members of the community, and ensure provider accountability for the care received. Access the full report online at: <http://www.theconsumervoice.org/CPR>.

About the Consumer Voice

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care was formed as the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform in 1975 because of public concern about substandard care in nursing homes. Today, the Consumer Voice is the leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care and helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves.