



News for Immediate Release

May 24, 2011

Secretary of Aging Applauds Organizations for Award-Winning Work to Help Older Adults Avoid Repeat Hospitalizations

Harrisburg – Secretary of Aging Brian Duke today applauded several organizations that have earned federal awards for helping older adults remain healthy after a hospital stay.

Duke presented the groups with 2011 Excellence in Action Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Care Transition. The awardees, chosen by the U.S. Administration on Aging and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, are:

- Area Agency on Aging of Westmoreland County
- The Southwestern PA Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
- Excelsa Westmoreland Hospital; Monongahela Valley Hospital
- Quality Insights of Pennsylvania

“Care transition ensures coordination and continuity of health care when a patient is discharged from the hospital to their home,” said Duke. “These organizations perform critical work to help older Pennsylvanians to better care for themselves at home so they will not have to return to a hospital.”

Statistics show that 20 percent of Medicare recipients are readmitted to a hospital within 30 days of discharge. Research has shown that many hospital readmissions can be avoided if patients follow through with post-discharge medical appointments, tell their doctors about changes to their prescriptions and are able to recognize the early warning signs or symptoms of medical complications.

For example, the care transition program assigns a health coach from an Area Agency on Aging to educate individual consumers about transition care. The coach also encourages the individual to carefully follow directives for a smooth return to full health.

The awardees were honored for their collaborative work to ensure consumers are more engaged in their own health care.

For information about the Department of Aging and services for older Pennsylvanians, visit www.aging.state.pa.us or call 717-783-1550.

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