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**PROTECTION AND
ADVOCACY FOR
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES, INC.**

Protection & Advocacy Issues Report on Community Residential Care Facilities***“No Place to Call Home” Documents Deplorable Living Conditions
and Inadequate State Oversight***

COLUMBIA, SC (July 21, 2009) – After releasing shocking details of a 14 month-long investigation in a report titled “No Place to Call Home,” Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc (P&A) today called for immediate state action to protect the residents of South Carolina Community Residential Care Facilities (CRCF) that are operating under unsafe, unsanitary and disgraceful conditions.

P&A issued the report today to the public, sending copies to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Attorney General, the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (LLR) and the Long Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman. P&A made more than 150 unannounced visits to CRCF facilities over the course of two years. The report outlines immediate action items that P&A feels will lead to better treatment of the 16,700 South Carolinians living in CRCFs, which house between two and more than 100 residents who are elderly or have disabilities.

“The conditions in which residents of many South Carolina CRCFs live are absolutely disgraceful, and our hope is to prevent even more people from living in squalor, suffering abuse and neglect or even dying due to lack of oversight,” said Gloria Prevost, Executive Director of P&A. “Through this report, we urge the state to take action to protect residents of CRCFs operating in our state.”

As a result of P&A’s review of hundreds of facility and agency documents and interviews with CRCF staff, residents and agency personnel, P&A recommends:

1. The statutes and regulations governing CRCFs should be revised to give licensing agencies more enforcement options against frequently cited facilities and administrators, such as:
 - The power to suspend new admissions to CRCFs with repeated, uncorrected violations that significantly jeopardize residents’ lives or health while the appellate process to suspend or revoke a license is pending.
 - The power to make suspension of operations automatic when a license has been revoked, followed by an emergency hearing to determine whether the facility should remain closed during the appeal or be allowed to resume operations.
 - The ability to suspend the license of an administrator, prior to a hearing, based upon frequent or egregious violations that significantly jeopardize residents’ lives or health.
 - The creation of an expedited appeal process to review license suspensions or suspension of new resident admissions.
 - The consideration of information relating not only to the current licensing period, but of all pertinent information regarding the facility and the applicant when considering applications and renewals of licenses.

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2. DHEC should inform the public and concerned parties about problem facilities. Facility inspection reports, including corrective actions, should be made available to the public on the agency's website and posted at the facility.
3. The state should create an Adult Abuse Registry of individuals who have substantiated allegations of abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults against them. Facilities should be required to check the Registry before hiring a prospective employee.
4. The General Assembly should fully fund enough DHEC inspection staff to provide for periodic unannounced visits and full, timely investigation of all allegations for regulatory violations.
5. The General Assembly should adequately fund the SC Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation to enable prompt investigation of complaints against CRCF administrators.

Other key findings in the report include:

- Resident neglect and abuse by untrained, unmotivated staff that fall asleep on the job or, in some instances, have criminal backgrounds including cases of sexual abuse and assault.
- Unsanitary, unsafe and unacceptable living conditions, including cockroach infestations, bloodstained walls and urine-soaked furnishings.
- Inadequate documentation, administration and storage of prescription medications – Several instances in which prescription drugs were either not administered at all or were administered past the expiration dates.
- Failure to ensure that residents' basic personal hygiene needs are met – One resident received one shower over the course of five months.
- Failure to meet food quality and sanitation standards.

The report highlights personal struggles of several residents. To download and view the entire report visit <http://www.protectionandadvocacy-sc.org/>.

To view images of conditions in facilities visited during this investigation, please visit <http://www.imre.com/scpa/gallery.html>.

About Protection & Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc.

Established in 1977 as the protection and advocacy system for the State of South Carolina, P&A is mandated by state and federal law to protect the rights of people with disabilities in South Carolina. P&A is a private, non-profit corporation governed by a volunteer board of directors. As required by federal law, P&A is independent of all agencies that provide treatment or other services to people with disabilities.

P&A has offices throughout the state of South Carolina including Columbia, Greenville, Charleston and Florence. P&A is a member of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN).

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