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As National Family Caregivers Month Begins, Private Care Association Calls Attention to Growing Nationwide Need for Respite Care

Southern Pines, N.C. – November 1, 2013 – The Private Care Association (PCA), the national association for private duty home care registries and referral agencies since 1977, joined in the celebration of National Family Caregivers Month today by raising attention to the growing problem of “respite care” in America and the need for cost-effective resources to help Americans obtain care for aging family members.

National Family Caregivers Month, which takes place during the month of November, is an opportunity to honor the estimated 90 million family caregivers in the U.S. today. Family caregivers are individuals who provide assistance to aging loved ones suffering from an underlying physical or mental disability but who are not paid for those services.

An August 2013 study published by the AARP Public Policy Institute concluded that “the supply of family caregivers is unlikely to keep pace with future demand” in America. The study found that the number of potential adult family caregivers for each American over the age of 80 is expected to plunge from seven potential caregivers in 2010 to just four potential caregivers by 2030 and then down to as few as three potential caregivers by 2050.

“Two out of every five American adults are caring for an older loved one who is aging in place, a number that continues to increase each year as the demographics shift toward an aging population,” said Jim Mark, president of the PCA. “Moreover, the number of elderly

Americans suffering from Alzheimer's disease has continued to rise in recent years, compounding this need for full-time care."

According to Mark, one of the serious implications of the growing care gap facing family caregivers is the need for frequent "respite care" for the individuals providing the care to their loved ones. Respite care is short-term, temporary relief to those who are caring for elderly family members.

There is recent research indicating good news for family caregivers who serve willingly and take care of themselves. In an October 2013 report published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, researchers from the Johns Hopkins University Center on Aging and Health found that "providing care for a chronically ill or disabled family member not only fails to increase health risk, but also is associated with a nine-month extension in life expectancy over the six-year period of the study." The researchers also noted the "enhanced self-esteem, recognition and gratitude from their care recipients" that willing family caregivers experienced.

"It's essential that family caregivers obtain frequent and regular breaks from providing care to their loved ones in order for them to be able to take care of their own health and to sustain themselves, but many Americans are under the impression that private duty home care is too expensive," said Mark. "The truth is that there are a number of excellent resources available to consumers by which they can find high-quality respite care for their loved ones at an affordable price. For example, a private duty home care registry can save families anywhere from 10 to 30 percent on their private in-home care expenses while allowing consumers to individually select caregivers with whom they feel most comfortable caring for their loved one while they get the break they need as the family caregiver."

A "registry" is a home care company that refers self-employed caregivers to individuals on a private basis for care that is needed anywhere from a few hours at a time up to 24 hours a day. These caregivers are subjected to a very rigorous screening and verification process to ensure that the registry refers only the very best, qualified caregivers. For more information

about private duty home care registries, please go to www.privatecare.org.

About PCA

Since 1977, the Private Care Association (PCA) has been the voice of private duty home care. PCA's membership is made up of home care registries that refer self-employed caregivers to provide assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, lifting/transferring, continence care, feeding/meal preparation, companion care, homemaker services and nursing services in the client's home. The PCA has an involved government relations program that actively presents its position to public policymakers at the state and federal levels and, as the national voice for home care registries, the PCA promotes the interests of the private duty home care industry, advocating the consumer-directed model of care and consumer choice. For more information, please go to www.privatecare.org.

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