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Fighting To Go Back Home: Report Shows Success of Program to Transition Out of Nursing Homes

Belvidere: Data released by the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services on April 13, 2006 states the pilot program being conducted in Warren County to speed up the Medicaid application process and throughout the state to transition citizens out of nursing homes and into their homes and communities has been a success. The State has been piloting this new long-term care program with the one-year goal of moving 500 people living in nursing homes back into their own homes or community settings. Over 320 individuals have made the transition out of nursing homes since July 2005.

This program, currently being tested in Warren and Atlantic counties, pioneers the effort to give New Jersey citizens the autonomy in determining where they should receive their long-term care. Currently, many individuals are forced into nursing homes because of funding constraints; only 24% of available state funds are allocated toward home- and community-based care, forcing many into nursing homes despite the fact that they would prefer to receive their long-term care at home. An AARP conducted survey shows that more than 90% of its members would rather receive their long-term care in their homes and in their communities than in nursing homes.

“At AARP, we believe that everyone has the right to age with independence, dignity, and choice. Being forced into one type of care when other options may be available does not equate to those terms and does not best serve the citizens of this state,” claims Sy Larson, AARP New Jersey State President. “We applaud the State and Warren County’s effort to give citizens the choice to direct their own care.”

Receiving care in home- and community-based settings is not only in line with what citizens want, but also uses state funds in a more efficient manner. The state could serve at least 2 people in the community for every 1 person living in a nursing home who is supported by Medicaid.

STATEMENT FROM SPEAKERS AT THE CONFERENCE.

This exciting initiative was set in motion one year ago, when then-Governor Richard Codey signed Executive Order 31, allowing the pilot program to transition individuals out of nursing homes, to help an additional 400 individuals to remain in their homes, and to focus on speeding up the Medicare eligibility process. “This program has been a success for citizens in Warren and Atlantic counties and we believe every New Jersey citizen should have the same rights. We

support the expansion of this program throughout the Garden State,” Sy Larson AARP New Jersey State President notes.

WHAT: Announcement that Home and Community-Based Long-Term Care options are more of a reality with a pilot program in Warren County & across the state.

WHERE: Wayne Dumont, Jr. Admin. Bldg., 165 County Road, 519 South, Belvidere, New Jersey 07823, Telephone: (908) 475-6500

WHEN: Tuesday May 9, 2006, 10:30AM

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