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*Leading the industry that cares for people at home
through advocacy and education*

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NPDA Joins Coalition to Address “Full-Time Workers”

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. - The National Private Duty Association (NPDA), a nationwide trade association serving as the voice of the private pay home care industry, has joined a coalition of businesses that employ significant numbers of part-time and seasonal workers.

The coalition is urging members of Congress to define “full-time workers” in the emerging health reform legislation in a way that accommodates the unique needs of companies and workers that involve long periods without working in between full-time assignments. Employers face the potential for hefty fees for failing to insure their temporary or short-term workforces.

“The NPDA is concerned that some health care legislation is not clear as to how many weeks an employee must work in order to qualify for insurance coverage,” said Kim Stoneking, CAE, executive director for the NPDA. “Like many service businesses, home care agencies belonging to the NPDA often have employees who work certain assignments, and then go a long time period of time before working again.”

In service sector industries, it is commonplace for employees to work more than 30 hours one week and less than 30 hours the next. Clarifying that full-time employment is 390 hours in a calendar quarter (or 30 hours per week for 13 weeks) will eliminate ambiguity and assure that employees keep the health plans that they have instead of ping-ponging back and forth between employer-sponsored coverage and the new health insurance exchange as their schedules fluctuate.

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The coalition has supporters in the Congress. Among provisions supported by coalition members is language defining a full-time employee as an individual working 30 hours a week over the course of a calendar quarter. This provision, championed by Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash, is among the changes that the NPDA and the coalition are hopeful will be included in the health reform bill that goes to the Senate floor for debate.

The NPDA and the coalition are working to convince lawmakers that new laws encompassing “employer shared responsibility” must do what is possible to avoid imposing significant levels of new costs on employers that, like everyone, are struggling in a difficult economy. The employer mandate provisions must not be allowed to cripple the job-creating potential of business, especially small and service-providing firms.

“A growing number of lawmakers are realizing that a mandate translates into increased cost to employers already facing financial challenges during these tough economic times,” Stoneking said. “The NPDA is committed to controlling the cost of home care. Fees on employers will mean increasing prices for home care to those who can least afford it.”

Danea Kehoe, lobbyist for the NPDA, explained some of the priorities NPDA and the coalition are actively working on to lessen the economic impact of employer mandate proposals by:

- Getting a 90-day waiting period prior to an employer having to enroll new hires in their health plans;
- Getting the definition of “full-time” worker amended to cover those who work 30 hours/week for a calendar quarter (390 hours/quarter); and
- Making sure part-time workers are excluded from the employer mandate.

The NPDA and the coalition are cautiously optimistic about their chances of persuading Senate leadership to include in the Senate bill a 90-day waiting period, and a 390/calendar quarter definition of “full-time.”

The National Private Duty Association, founded in 2002, is a nationwide trade association for agencies providing private pay home care. With members in 48 states, NPDA is the voice of the private duty home care industry and is leading the industry that cares for people at home through advocacy and education.

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