NCCBH 2007 Award for Excellence in Grassroots Advocacy Nomination

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Community Providers Association (PCPA) I am nominating the PCPA Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC) and Government Relations Institute (GRI©) Alumni Network (Network) for the National's Council's 2007 Award for Excellence in Grassroots Advocacy.

PCPA represents over 200 community-based providers of mental health (MH), mental retardation (MR), and drug and alcohol (D&A) services in over 1,100 locations throughout Pennsylvania. The LAC, formally established in early 2004, is comprised of members covering all three service areas and is representative of both agency size and geographic location. Members are asked to make a commitment of service to the LAC commensurate with the legislative session in Pennsylvania. In its three years, the LAC and the Network have co-sponsored association lobby days, developed state budget position recommendations for the PCPA Board of Directors, and engaged legislators and key staffers in multiple meetings around behavioral health and mental retardation issues.

The GRI© was established in 1998 as an intensive training program for PCPA members on legislative and government issues. Over the past several years, the curriculum has expanded to include projects submissions and presentations by class members and direct interactions of participants with legislators and legislative staff. The Network, comprised of GRI© graduates, was formed in 2003 as the true foundation of PCPA's legislative grassroots efforts. The Network responds and is active on a host of legislation issues, coordinates special legislative activities and events, and develops and maintains a variety of fundraising activities for the Pennsylvania Community Providers Political Action Committee.

Together the LAC and Network have formed a strong, member-based grassroots advocacy network for PCPA and its member organizations. PCPA members and their respective staff are called to legislative action not only by the association's director of legislative affairs, but also by their own colleagues. These individuals have been trained in appropriate government advocacy, learned to make effective and efficient arguments on behalf of their issues and constituencies, and understand the realities of the legislative processes. From this LAC/Network partnership and drastically increased member organization involvement, the staff/families/consumers/clients served by PCPA members have been inspired to participate more fully in the legislative process.

The most impressive measurement of this collaborative success was recognized during the recently-completed 2005/06 Pennsylvania legislative session through two separate efforts. Legislation regarding the institution of an inflationary index for MH/MR unanimously passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives (twice) and received only three negative votes in the
Senate of Pennsylvania, passing there as well. However, even with such widespread legislative support, Pennsylvania’s governor vetoed House Bill 1813. While this was a devastating blow to the MH/MR community, House Bill 1813 – and the legislative advocacy surrounding it – had a tremendous impact on the dialogue at the state level relative to the need for long-term, stable system funding for MH/MR. Additionally, legislation to dedicate a portion of funds from a current tax on Pennsylvania wine and spirits to D&A services had an excellent “first outing.” Through advocacy efforts led by the association, House Bill 1649 passed the House unanimously. The bill did not come up for a final Senate vote prior to the close of session, but was voted unanimously out of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. This bill will be re-introduced in the 2007/08 legislative session.

Neither piece of legislation would have achieved this kind of success without the leadership and advocacy of PCPA’s LAC/Network partnership. The LAC, co-chaired by Alan J. Hartl, Lenape Valley Foundation, Inc., and Stephen Christian-Michaels, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, has formed an excellent grassroots advocacy partnership with the Network, chaired by Lisa Basci, Community Services Group. Through the leadership of these individuals and the advocacy of PCPA members, issues surrounding adequate funding for MH/MR/D&A now appear significantly on the “radar screens” of legislators and administration officials alike. In the final weeks of the 2005/06 legislative session, funding for MH/MR/D&A issues was at the top of the list of discussion items among legislators and the governor and received more media coverage than in recent memory. While ultimately not successful with enactment of House Bill 1813 or House Bill 1649 at this time, the efforts of PCPA’s LAC/Network have assured that community behavioral health and mental retardation is a sector viewed as committed, organized, and able to formulate intelligent and convincing arguments around many issues.

PCPA is a statewide organization, but LAC members have also participated in national lobby day efforts with NCCBH and included federal legislators in their state advocacy efforts. While concentration is placed on state issues, members of the LAC and Network have engaged federal legislators when appropriate. PCPA’s national participation would not be nearly as strong without the participation of this leadership group – two groups who are educated and well-versed on the issues at hand.

Thank you for your consideration of PCPA’s LAC/Network for the 2007 NCCBH Award for Excellence in Grassroots Advocacy. Many other states could learn from PCPA’s successes and failures relative to legislative advocacy in Pennsylvania, but none of it would be possible without the strong partnership of the LAC/Network.

Melissa DiSanto Simmons
PCPA Director of Legislative Affairs
House Bill 1813 Anticipated to Move

The House Health and Human Services Committee has indicated that the House Appropriations Committee will likely move House Bill 1813 (inflationary index legislation for mental health/mental retardation [MH/MR] programs) from committee as early as today. This means that House Bill 1813 could come up for a House floor vote as early as tomorrow. The bill has been in the Appropriations Committee since December 14, 2005. A fiscal note for the bill was not completed as of this morning but is expected to be released later today.

Contact House Members Immediately
PCPA members are asked to contact their state representatives immediately. Information regarding identifying one's representative or locating contact information for him/her can be found in PCPA's Legislative Directory booklet or on the web site at www.paproviders.org in the Legislative Affairs Section.

Background Information
Information pertinent to House Bill 1813 including a legislative analysis, talking points, and testimony, can be found from the Legislative Tracking device in the Legislative Affairs section of PCPA's web site. Additionally, members can refer to information (also available on the web site) prepared earlier this month for PCPA's district lobby month.

Message to Legislators
Representatives need to hear a clear, succinct message regarding House Bill 1813. Below are suggested points to highlight during phone calls with legislators or their staff:

"Hello, my name is [   ] and I am a provider/staffer/consumer of mental health/mental retardation or MH/MR services. I live in [   ] county. I am a voter and a taxpayer and I live in your district [if appropriate].

I understand that House Bill 1813, which would allow for an inflationary index tied to the national Home Health Market Basket Index (HHMBI) for MH/MR programs, will likely come up for a floor vote in the House, perhaps as early as January 25. The MH/MR system has historically requested annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). Institution of an index would allow for proper inflationary adjustments and alleviate the need for an annual COLA request.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your support on this bill."

*If the legislator you have contacted is a co-sponsor of the bill please thank him/her for their past support. Co-sponsors (by last name) are: Kenney, Allen, Baldwin, Barrar, Bastian, Bebko-Jones, Belardi, Belfanti, Benninghoff, Beyer, Blackwell, Blaum, Bunt, Buxton, Caltagirone, Cappelli, Causer, Cawley, Cornell, Costa, Crahall, Curry, Dally, Denlinger, DeWeese, Diven, J. Evans, Fabrizio, Fichter, Fleagle, George, Gingrich, Godshall, Good, Goodman, Grucela, Haluska, Hanna, Harhai, Harhart, Harper, Hasay, Herman, Hess, Hutchinson, James, Josephs, Killion, LaGrotta, Lederer, Levandusky, Maitland, Mann, Markosek, McCall, McGill, McIlhatten, Miccozie, Mundy, Mustio, Myers, Nailor, O'Neill, Petrarca, Petri, Phillips, Pistella, Quigley, Readshaw, Reed, Reichley, Rooney, Ross, Rubley, Sainato, Samuelson, Santoni, Scavello, Shapiro, Staback, R. Stevenson, T. Stevenson, Surra, E.Z. Taylor, J. Taylor, Thomas, True, Turzai, Walko, Wansacz, Watson, Wilt, Wojnaroski, and Yudichak.
Movement of Long-term Funding Legislation

PCPA, along with other stakeholders, has been advancing an agenda of long-term, stable system funding for the mental health/mental retardation/drug and alcohol (MH/MR/D&A) system. Two informational hearings have convened in the House Health and Human Services Committee, chaired by Rep. George Kenney (R-Philadelphia), regarding House Bill 1813 (inflationary index for MH/MR) and House Bill 1649 (dedicated alcohol tax). Each bill also has companion legislation in the Senate in the forms of Senate Bill 1006 (inflationary index for MH/MR) and Senate Bill 727 (dedicated alcohol tax).

Inflationary Index Legislation
House Bill 1813 passed the House January 24 by a vote of 194-0. The bill was then referred to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. On March 15 the committee, chaired by Sen. Jake Corman, voted unanimously to report both House Bill 1813 and Senate Bill 1006 out of committee; a technical amendment was made to House Bill 1813 to properly address the name of the inflationary index. While voting the bills out of committee means they can now be considered for a floor vote, it is more likely that the bills will be re-referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee. PCPA will keep members apprised on next steps and grassroots outreach to key legislators.

Dedicated Alcohol Tax Legislation
After a positive reception at its February hearing it is likely that House Bill 1649 will be taken up by the House Health and Human Services Committee for a committee vote in the near future. It is imperative that PCPA members contact committee members urging them to vote House Bill 1649 out of committee. A listing of committee members follows:

- Rep. George Kenney (R-Philadelphia)  717-787-8523
- Rep. Katie True (R-Lancaster)  717-705-7161
- Rep. Kerry Benninghoff (R-Centre/Mifflin)  717-783-1918
- Rep. Beverly Mackereth (R-York)  717-783-2655
- Rep. Fred McIlhattan (R-Armstrong/Clarion)  717-772-9908
- Rep. Michael Diven (R-Allegheny)  717-787-4652
- Rep. Patrick E. Fleagle (R-Franklin)  717-783-5218
- Rep. Mauree A. Gingrich (R-Lebanon)  717-783-1815
- Rep. Julie Harhart (R-Lehigh/Northampton)  717-772-5398
- Rep. Stephen R. Maitland (R-Adams/Franklin)  717-783-5217
- Rep. Douglas G. Reichley (R-Berks/Lehigh)  717-787-1000
- Rep. Chris Ross (R-Chester)  717-783-1574
- Rep. Curtis G. Sonney (R-Erie)  717-783-9087
### PCPA Legislative Alert  Movement of...  March 16, 2006

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<tr>
<th>Representative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rep. Frank L. Oliver (D-Philadelphia)</td>
<td>717-787-3480</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rep. Linda Bebko-Jones (D-Erie)</td>
<td>717-772-4035</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rep. Louise Williams Bishop (D-Philadelphia)</td>
<td>717-783-2192</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rep. Jake Wheatley, Jr. (D-Allegheny)</td>
<td>717-783-3783</td>
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<td>Rep. Harold James (D-Philadelphia)</td>
<td>717-787-9477</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rep. Thaddeus Kirkland (D-Delaware)</td>
<td>717-787-5881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rep. Nick Kotik (D-Allegheny)</td>
<td>717-783-3780</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rep. Marie A. Lederer (D-Philadelphia)</td>
<td>717-783-8098</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rep. Ronald G. Waters (D-Delaware/Philadelphia)</td>
<td>717-772-9850</td>
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### Additional Information
PCPA members should refer to the Legislative Tracking device located in the *Legislative Affairs* section of the PCPA web site to access direct links to the bills, talking points, etc. Members may also contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs, or any policy specialist at the association with questions or concerns.
Legislative Alert

Dedicated Alcohol Tax Bill Unanimously Voted Out of House Health and Human Services Committee

PCPA is pleased to report that House Bill 1649 (dedicated alcohol tax) was unanimously voted out of the House Health and Human Services Committee on May 2. Later in the day the bill was up for its first of three considerations, a process leading to a floor vote (a vote for-or-against the bill by the full Pennsylvania House of Representatives). PCPA will keep members apprised of House Bill 1649’s progress.

Committee Members Support Legislation

Rep. Katie True (R-Lancaster), committee secretary and prime sponsor of House Bill 1649, briefly commented on the bill prior to the committee vote. True emphasized that parents, advocates, and providers have been working for decades to secure drug and alcohol (D&A) funding in the commonwealth. This bill, she said, would be a good first step in that direction – and needs to be followed by further efforts to increase funding for D&A treatment and prevention.

Rep. Jake Wheatley, Jr. (D-Allegheny), along with Chairman George T. Kenney, Jr. (R-Philadelphia), reiterated that House Bill 1649 is a revenue-neutral funding mechanism. Kenney stated that funding for the listed D&A programs currently comes from the General Fund where alcohol taxes are deposited. Should House Bill 1649 become law, 75 percent of the Johnstown Flood Tax would be deposited into the newly established Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Prevention Fund (thus securing the listed line items) and monies would not come from the General Fund for these programs.

“[This bill would] permanently build the basement and part of the first floor [for D&A funding security],” commented Rep. Katharine M. Watson (R-Bucks). Watson said she has heard repeatedly from providers and other constituents regarding the inadequate funding for D&A services.

Rep. Marie A. Lederer (D-Philadelphia) and Watson moved that the bill be voted from committee. The motion was adopted unanimously and the bill moved for first consideration.

Next Steps for Members

Members are urged to:

- contact members of the House Health and Human Services Committee and thank them for their support (a list of members can be found in the March 16 Legislative Alert), and
- contact their individual state representative now urging passage of House Bill 1649 when it comes up before the full House for a floor vote.

PCPA, along with other stakeholders, has been advancing the agenda of long-term, stable system funding for the mental health/mental retardation and D&A system. House Bill 1649 is a step in this direction for the D&A component. It should be noted that Senate Bill 727 (dedicated alcohol tax) is the companion legislation to House Bill 1649. Visit the Legislative Affairs section of the PCPA website to access direct links to the bills, talking points, and other materials.
Dedicated Alcohol Tax Initiative Passes House Unanimously

PCPA is pleased to inform members that the House version (House Bill 1649) of the dedicated alcohol tax initiative passed the House this afternoon unanimously. Today's passage from the House is a major achievement in making this legislation law...and reality.

Special Thanks
Thanks go to the PCPA members who have taken the time to contact their representatives in the past two years regarding House Bill 1649.

PCPA's sincerest appreciation also extends to:
- **Reps. Katie True** (R-Lancaster) and **Linda Bebko-Jones** (D-Erie), prime sponsors of House Bill 1649.
- **Rep. George T. Kenney, Jr.** (R-Philadelphia), chair of the House Health and Human Services Committee for his support and leadership on House Bill 1649.
- **Sens. Patricia H. Vance** (R-Cumberland/York) and **Jay Costa, Jr.** (D-Allegheny), prime sponsors of Senate Bill 727 (the Senate version of the dedicated alcohol tax legislation), who have also voiced support of this legislation within the House chamber.
- Legislative staff **Mark Ryan**, chief of staff to Vance and **Stacy Gromlich**, former House Health and Human Services Committee staff, for their hard work and dedication in making this bill a reality.
- Members and supporters of the **Coalition to Save Lives, Families and Communities**.
- **Morgan Plant**, PCPA lobbyist, for her tireless efforts in making this bill a reality.

While many have been involved in this effort it would not be as successful without the assistance and support of the aforementioned individuals and groups.

Next Steps
Members are encouraged to call their representatives this week and express their gratitude for the passage of House Bill 1649.

Members, as well as supporters of the dedicated alcohol tax legislation, are asked to contact their senators as soon as possible and urge passage of House Bill 1649 and/or Senate Bill 727.

Contact information for legislators can be found in the PCPA Legislative Directory or by accessing the PCPA web site at www.paproviders.org, visiting the Internet Resources section, and selecting the Pennsylvania legislative web site. Once in site, address or zip code information can be entered in the upper-right corner and will display relevant representatives and senators.

Contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs, or Lynn Cooper, deputy director, at the association with questions or concerns.
A Box of 11 Cookies
Most pastries and baked goods are sold or dispensed by the dozen. In fact, many bakeries and caterers even offer the “baker’s dozen” for their wares, saying that one additional item (bringing the total of the “dozen” to 13) is better. While community providers of mental health/mental retardation/drug and alcohol services (MH/MR/D&A) would also like to subscribe to this school of thought, our story is much different. Our reality is that we have “the provider’s dozen” – our box is missing something to make it complete...and that something is stable and reliable program funding.

How You Can Help Complete Our “Dozen”
PCPA and other statewide stakeholders have supported two sets of long-term funding legislation: House Bill 1813/Senate Bill 1006 (inflationary index for MH/MR) and House Bill 1649/Senate Bill 727 (dedicated alcohol tax initiative for D&A).

House Bill 1813 and House Bill 1649 have passed the House unanimously and currently sit in the Senate Appropriations Committee awaiting action. As this goes to print, House Bill 1813 is scheduled for a committee vote September 25.

As a senator receiving this cookie box, we urge you to contact your leadership immediately to move both House Bill 1813 and House Bill 1649 and then support the bills when they come up for floor votes.

Since there is always the chance that the legislation will be amended in the Senate, resulting in the bills being referred back to the House for concurrence, members of House leadership are also receiving a cookie box. Should either House Bill 1813 or House Bill 1649 come back to the House for concurrence, members of House leadership are urged to move and support the bills immediately for a floor vote.

This Legislation Is a Necessary Ingredient for Our “Dozen”
- **House Bill 1813/ Senate Bill 1006** (inflationary index for MH/MR): This legislation would allow for an annual inflationary adjustment (formerly referred to as cost-of-living adjustment or COLA) for MH/MR programs. The inflationary adjustment would be based upon a mechanism known as the Home Health Market Basket Index (HHMBI). PCPA has been supportive of the commonwealth using a mechanism where annual inflationary adjustments would be automatic for the MH/MR system. PCPA spearheaded introduction of this legislation in concert with the MH/MR Coalition.

- **House Bill 1649/ Senate Bill 727** (dedicated alcohol tax initiative for D&A): The majority of the D&A line items have not seen an increase in many years. Clients go untreated late in the fiscal year due to exhausted funding sources. Family members remain incarcerated rather than in treatment due to lack of funding. The loss of intergovernmental transfer monies is a devastating loss to already inadequate D&A funding. As the commonwealth promotes and profits from the sale of alcohol, it is appropriate that a portion of those funds be utilized to help citizens who develop problems with the product.
Help Make House Bill 1813 Become Law

PCPA's Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC) recently held a *Targeted Bill Action* day, during which a box of *The Provider's Dozen* cookies (a box containing 11 cookies) was delivered to all senators and select House leadership at the Capitol. This event, combined with the efforts of other statewide organizations, is realizing much success.

**Make Further Legislative Contacts**

Senate leadership has stated that House Bill 1813 (inflationary index for mental health/mental retardation [MH/MR]) will come up for a vote before the full Senate on October 16 - and we need your help. Senators must hear from providers/consumers/interested parties that they should vote “yea” on House Bill 1813 and that the legislation must become law. Refer to the *Targeted Bill Action talking points for inflationary index legislation* (dated September 26).

PCPA knows that community providers have been very active on the issue of long-term, stable system funding...but we need you to keep up the pressure! House Bill 1813 has one more step to pass the Senate - it must be voted upon by the full Senate. Then, due to amendments by the Senate adding clarifying language, the bill must return to the House for concurrence (that is, for the House to agree to the Senate amendments). Once the House would concur with the Senate amendments and vote to pass the bill again, House Bill 1813 would arrive on Governor Edward G. Rendell's desk; it would require his signature to become law.

**Legislative and Governor Contacts**

Please refer to the handout containing key contact information, including that for all 50 senators, key House leadership and legislative friends, and the governor's office.

- **When calling the Senate:** Thank the senator for his/her past support of MH/MR/drug and alcohol (D&A). Tell the senator/staffer that you understand House Bill 1813 will come up for a vote in the Senate on October 16. State that the senator should vote “yea” on House Bill 1813, which would help stabilize funding for the MH/MR system. Then, remind the senator/staffer that the Senate still needs to vote “yea” on House Bill 1649 (dedicated alcohol tax initiative) to secure funding for the D&A system. Refer to the *Targeted Bill Action talking points for dedicated alcohol tax initiative* (dated September 26).

- **When calling House leadership:** Thank the representative for his/her past support of MH/MR/D&A. Tell the representative/staffers that the Senate is scheduled to vote on House Bill 1813 on October 16. Due to clarifying amendments inserted into the bill by the Senate, should the Senate approve the bill it will need to come back to the House for concurrence (i.e., agreement). Urge that the representative do everything possible to bring House Bill 1813 up for an immediate vote, should it come back to the House, and then to vote “yea” on House Bill 1813.

- **When calling the governor's office:** Urge that the governor sign House Bill 1813 into law, should it arrive on his desk from the legislature. *Note that administration officials have not supported House Bill 1813 citing high cost as an obstacle.*
Legislative Alert

Movement of MH/ MR/ D&A Legislation

As reported during the PCPA conference, long-term funding legislation for mental health/mental retardation/drug and alcohol (MH/MR/D&A) services is moving this week in the legislature. Due to this being a sine die year (the two-year legislative session ends November 30), and the fact that the legislature may only return for a brief session following the election, this legislation is moving (and must continue to move) rapidly through the legislative process.

House Bill 1813
The Senate voted 46-3 (Sens. Robert J. Mellow, Vincent J. Fumo, and Jim Ferlo voted “no”) to pass House Bill 1813 (inflationary index for MH/MR). Due to technical amendments inserted by the senate, the bill must return to the House for concurrence (agreement to the amendments). House leadership is scheduled to bring the bill up for a full House vote as early as today. Representatives must hear from providers/consumers/interested parties that they should vote “yea” on House Bill 1813 and that the legislation must become law. Refer to the Targeted Bill Action talking points for inflationary index legislation (dated September 26). Once the House concurs with the Senate amendments and votes to pass the bill again, House Bill 1813 would arrive on Governor Edward G. Rendell’s desk. It would require his signature to become law.

Members are urged to take a moment today to call and thank senators who voted for House Bill 1813. A special thanks to Sen. Ted Erickson, who prime-sponsored Senate Bill 1006 (companion legislation to House Bill 1813), for championing this legislation in the senate and to Sen. Jake Corman, chair of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, for moving this bill through the legislative process.

House Bill 1649
House Bill 1649 was voted out of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee unanimously yesterday. It could come up for a full Senate floor vote as early as today. Call your senators immediately to urge passage of House Bill 1649. Refer to the Targeted Bill Action talking points for dedicated alcohol tax legislation (dated September 26). Once the Senate passes House Bill 1649, due to technical amendments inserted by the Senate, it must return to the House for concurrence.

Legislative and Governor Contact Information
Members should refer to the Legislative Alert dated October 5 for the following contact information:

- all 50 senators,
- House leadership, and
- the governor’s office.

Keep up the good work! Contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons at melissa@paproviders.org or by calling the association with questions or feedback.
Urge Governor Rendell to Sign House Bill 1813

PCPA is pleased to report that House Bill 1813 (inflationary index for mental health/mental retardation [MH/MR]) passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives by a vote of 195-0 Tuesday. A special thanks to Chairman George T. Kenney, Jr. (R-Philadelphia) for his leadership with this legislation and to his staff for calling to share the wonderful news with PCPA upon passage.

Governor Must Act Now
There is one more step for House Bill 1813 to become law: it must be signed by Governor Edward G. Rendell. Members and supporters should contact the governor’s office immediately, urging that he sign House Bill 1813 into law. This bill will give MH/MR programs and services a good, healthy start towards annual funding stability. For further information regarding the bill, refer to the association’s Targeted Bill Action talking points for inflationary index legislation. The governor’s office can be reached at 717-787-2500 or 800-932-0784.

House Bill 1649 Awaits Senate Action
House Bill 1649 (dedicated alcohol tax for drug and alcohol [D&A]) currently awaits Senate action. It was referred back to the Senate Appropriations Committee Tuesday. Interests such as tourism and the arts are also competing for Johnstown Flood Tax monies; community providers must make certain those dollars are earmarked for treatment. Please continue calling your senators and urging a "yea" vote on House Bill 1649. For a complete listing of Harrisburg office numbers and email addresses for all 50 senators, reference the October 5 Legislative Alert.

Further Information
For further information regarding House Bill 1813 and House Bill 1649 visit the Legislative Affairs section and archives of PCPA’s web site at www.paproviders.org. Contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs, at the association with questions or feedback from legislative and gubernatorial contacts.
Dedicated Alcohol Tax Initiative Will Not Occur This Session

PCPA regrets to inform the membership that Senate leadership staff have notified the association that House Bill 1649 (dedicated alcohol tax initiative) will not be considered before the close of this session. PCPA and its supporters are disappointed that House Bill 1649 was unable to move through the final stages to enactment this session. However, those involved with this initiative should be proud of how far the bill has come since its inception...and in such a short period of time. PCPA and legislative supporters will return with the bill next session, and all look forward to securing the funding for these essential drug and alcohol (D&A) services.

Special Thanks
Thanks go to the PCPA members who have taken the time to contact their legislators in the past two years regarding House Bill 1649.

PCPA’s sincerest appreciation also extends to:

- **Reps. Katie True** (R-Lancaster) and **Linda Bebko-Jones** (D-Erie), prime sponsors of House Bill 1649.
- **Rep. George T. Kenney, Jr.** (R-Philadelphia), chair of the House Health and Human Services Committee for his support and leadership on House Bill 1649.
- **Sens. Patricia H. Vance** (R-Cumberland/York) and **Jay Costa, Jr.** (D-Allegheny), prime sponsors of Senate Bill 727 (the Senate version of the dedicated alcohol tax legislation), who have also voiced support of this legislation within the House chamber.
- Legislative staff **Mark Ryan**, chief of staff to Vance and **Stacy Gromlich**, former House Health and Human Services Committee staff, for their hard work and dedication in making this bill a reality.
- Members and supporters of the **Coalition to Save Lives, Families and Communities**.
- **Morgan Plant**, PCPA lobbyist, for her tireless efforts in making this bill a reality.

While many have been involved in this effort it would not have been as successful without the assistance and support of the aforementioned individuals and groups.

Contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs, or Lynn Cooper, deputy director, at the association with questions or concerns.
Press Release

For Immediate Release

Community Providers Urge Governor to Sign House Bill 1813

HARRISBURG (October 19) - A bill (House Bill 1813) that would require the administration to propose annual increases in the state budget for mental health/mental retardation (MH/MR) services is on Governor Edward G. Rendell’s desk awaiting his signature. However, high-level administration officials have stated that the governor may veto the bill.

“Historically, the MH/MR system, as well as the drug and alcohol (D&A) system, have been severely underfunded,” said George J. Kimes, executive director of the Pennsylvania Community Providers Association (PCPA).

PCPA is urging the governor to sign House Bill 1813. PCPA is a statewide trade association that represents over 200 community-based agencies that provide MH/MR, substance abuse, and other related human services. Its member agencies cover all 67 counties in the Commonwealth through over 1,100 locations and serve an estimated one million Pennsylvanians each year.

“While services provided in the community are often more cost-effective and offer a preferred environment for individuals needing treatment and supports, community services do need to be properly funded,” said Alan J. Hartl, executive director of Lenape Valley Foundation in Bucks County. Hartl also serves as co-chair of PCPA’s Legislative Affairs Committee.

“The rewards people get when they work in our programs can be immeasurable. However, many dedicated people cannot afford to continue to work for us because they cannot live on the wages we are able to pay. Likewise the credentialed staff in this field - psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses and therapists - are underpaid as well,” said Susan C. Blue, president of Community Services Group (CSG). CSG operates in the eastern and central portions of the state.
House Bill 1813 passed the Senate of Pennsylvania by a vote of 46-3 and passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives 195-0. The legislation would assure that increases for MH/MR, tied to a national index, at least keep pace with inflation.

Community providers, consumers in the MH/MR system, families, and others advocate each year for cost-of-living adjustment (COLA); in essence, the system seeks a cost of doing business. Some years are successful and some are not.

“The legislature has acted on this bill and now Governor Rendell must sign it into law – it is the right thing to do,” stated Steve Christian-Michaels, COO of Family Services of Western Pennsylvania and PCPA president.

“The bill makes good business sense.”

(2006)

Contact for this press release:
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(717) 418-1096 (mobile)
Press Release

For Immediate Release

Community Providers Disappointed in Governor’s Veto

HARRISBURG (October 31) - A bill (House Bill 1813) that would require the administration to propose annual increases in the state budget for mental health/mental retardation (MH/MR) services was vetoed October 27 by Governor Edward G. Rendell. House Bill 1813 was only the seventh veto of the Rendell Administration.

“The Pennsylvania Community Providers Association (PCPA), which represents over 200 community-based providers across the commonwealth, is gravely disappointed in both the governor and his decision to veto House Bill 1813. We now look to the General Assembly to return to Harrisburg and vote to override the governor’s veto of this much-needed legislation,” stated George J. Kimes, executive director of PCPA.

“Governor Rendell vetoed the bill – community providers and the people they serve have been placed low on this administration’s priority list. The consequences of this action hurt the neediest citizens of the state. Without basic funding increases waiting lists will continue to grow. Individuals, particularly people with mental illness, will continue to end up in jails and emergency rooms because other services are not available.”

This administration has regularly supported other segments of the public safety net system by providing routine and significant increases for hospitals, nursing homes, and managed care organizations.

“We must have equity with the other components of the public system,” continued Kimes.

House Bill 1813 has only ever received three negative votes. It passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives unanimously.
in January; the Senate of Pennsylvania by a vote of 46-3; and, when returned to the House in order for it to concur on some technical amendments made in the Senate, it again passed unanimously.

“The people and the legislature have spoken,” stated Kimes. “We cannot understand the governor’s rationale in vetoing House Bill 1813. We urge the legislature to override the governor’s veto and make House Bill 1813 become law.”

Services provided in the community are often more cost-effective and offer a preferred environment for individuals needing treatment and supports.

“However,” he continued, “community services do need to be properly funded. By tying annual increases for MH/MR to a national index (as outlined in House Bill 1813) the true costs of doing business are recognized and community providers could begin to keep pace with inflation.”

This continual erosion of support for these programs is impacting the stability of the programs and will soon affect the quality of care.

“Pennsylvania’s citizens with mental illness and mental retardation deserve quality care in the community” continued Kimes.

PCPA is a statewide trade association that represents community-based agencies that provide MH/MR, substance abuse, and other related human services. Its member agencies cover all 67 counties in the Commonwealth through over 1,100 locations and serve an estimated one million Pennsylvanians each year.

(2006)

Contact for this press release:
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Director of Legislative Affairs
PA Community Providers Association (PCPA)
Building 3, Suite 200/2101 North Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-1063
(717) 364-3280 (office)
(717) 418-1096 (mobile)
To: Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
From: George J. Kimes, Executive Director  
Date: November 14, 2006  
Re: MH/MR Services – Requesting an override of the governor’s veto of House Bill 1813

Thank you for your continued legislative support for mental health/mental retardation/drug and alcohol (MH/MR/D&A) services. We want to continue our partnership with you to address proper funding for these essential services. One of the best ways to do this would be to override the governor’s October 27 veto of House Bill 1813 (inflationary index for MH/MR). On behalf of the Pennsylvania Community Providers Association (PCPA) I am asking for your support again – this time urging you to bring up and support House Bill 1813 for a veto override vote.

The governor vetoed House Bill 1813 on October 27. This veto was a great disappointment for PCPA, the providers we represent, and the families and consumers we serve. To us, this action showed that support for the MH/MR/D&A system is not a priority for the current administration.

The General Assembly, however, continues to make MH/MR/D&A a priority in this commonwealth. You have annually supported cost of living adjustments (COLAs) and you have twice passed House Bill 1813 unanimously. I urge you to show this system and the citizens of Pennsylvania that MH/MR services are a priority in this state – that the health and well-being of citizens does indeed matter. We urge you to continue voicing your support for this legislation by contacting leadership now. Please urge your leadership that House Bill 1813 be brought up for a veto override vote.

Our advocacy for House Bill 1813 stems from our inability to secure stable and consistent funding for a system which is deteriorating in a variety of ways. Just as hospitals, nursing homes, and managed care organizations have mechanisms in place for annual increases, we in this major Medicaid community safety-net system are attempting to do the same. The Home Health Market Basket Index (HHMBI), the index cited in House Bill 1813, has averaged 1.3 percent more per year than we would expect if we received a two percent increase. While the governor is suggesting that this would cost in excess of one billion dollars over the next five years, what House Bill 1813 would actually provide averages out to an additional $20 million a year over what would be expected in a COLA.

While services provided in the community are often more cost-effective and offer a preferred environment for individuals needing treatment and supports, community services do need to be properly funded. House Bill 1813 outlines steps toward a long-term, pro-active solution to a long-term system funding crisis.

Again, we ask for your help in supporting these essential services for people with mental illness and mental retardation. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns. You may also contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, PCPA’s director of legislative affairs, or Morgan Plant, PCPA’s contract lobbyist.
PCPA continues to call on the Pennsylvania legislature to override Governor Edward G. Rendell’s veto of House Bill 1813 (inflationary index for mental health/mental retardation [MH/MR]). This was only the administration’s seventh veto of 2006. PCPA has participated in a legislative press conference led by families and consumers through The Arc of Pennsylvania and United Cerebral Palsy of Pennsylvania, written various press releases and authorized members to adapt those for local and regional public relations, and continued to urge members to contact House members. The association again asks members to maintain pressure with House members and begin to contact the Senate. There is little time remaining for the veto override to occur.

Last Opportunity for Veto
The 2005/06 legislative session ends November 30. The House and Senate, at this time, are only scheduled to be in session November 20 and 21. The Senate has indicated it will not reconvene after November 21. Therefore, the House must vote to override the veto of House Bill 1813 on November 20 and immediately send it to the Senate.

House Bill 1813 - Action Needed
House Bill 1813 is on the House calendar for consideration on November 20. Continue calling representatives and ask them to:
- Contact their respective leadership to bring House Bill 1813 up for a vote on November 20.
- Support the veto override with their vote.
- Encourage their respective caucus to vote as a united front to override the veto. This is especially important for House Democrats as there are political pressures around this issue.
- Contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons (melissa@paproviders.org) with feedback – especially on House Democrats.

Should the House successfully vote (a two-thirds majority is needed) to override House Bill 1813, the Senate has vowed to take up the bill. Start calling senators now urging them to:
- Contact their respective leadership to bring House Bill 1813 up for a vote as soon as it would arrive from the House chamber.
- Support the veto override with their vote.
- Encourage their respective caucus to vote as a united front to override the veto. Again, this is especially important for Senate Democrats.

For a complete listing of Harrisburg office numbers and email addresses for all 50 senators, reference the October 5 Legislative Alert.

Further Information
For further information regarding House Bill 1813 access the Legislative Affairs section and archives of PCPA’s web site at www.paproviders.org. The legislative tracking device contains a great deal of information under House Bill 1813, including PCPA’s November 14 memo to the House. Contact Ms. Simmons with questions or concerns as well as feedback from legislative contacts.
House Bill 1813 Dies in Session

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives did not attempt an override of Governor Edward G. Rendell's veto of House Bill 1813 before the end of the 2005/06 legislative session. Both chambers concluded their business November 21 and passed resolutions to adjourn the sine die session November 28 at 6:00 p.m. While this means the official end of the session will be November 28, both the House and Senate recessed November 21 and legislators will not return to Harrisburg until the beginning of the 2007/08 legislative session in January.

An override of the governor's veto required a two-thirds vote (136 of 203 House members) of each legislative chamber. Since House Bill 1813 was a House bill, any legislative veto override attempt needed to begin in the House. It was not clear to House Republican leadership that sufficient votes existed to get to 136. The governor's office exerted significant pressure on Democratic members to sustain the governor's veto, and it appeared that members of the House Democratic caucus were split.

PCPA was gravely disappointed in the governor's decision to veto House Bill 1813. While hope remained that the General Assembly - which saw only three members ever vote against House Bill 1813 - would vote to override the governor's veto, it became clear that political pressures beyond the issue of properly funding and stabilizing the mental health/mental retardation (MH/MR) system were at play.

In his veto message the governor said, "In the coming year, if our revenues and other expenditure demands permit us to increase the reimbursement rate more than two percent next year, I will propose doing so." A host of legislators and legislative leaders have also vowed to work with both the community MH/MR and drug and alcohol (D&A) system to provide an adequate funding increase. PCPA will come back strong during the 2007/08 budget discussions to advance the position of equity for the public health sector.

Legislative Action Outstanding

A special thanks to the Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC), GRI © Alumni Network, and Legislative eMail List for outstanding leadership efforts around legislative action for House Bills 1813 and 1649 during this sine die session. Spearheaded by LAC Co-chairs Alan J. Hartl and Steve Christian-Michaels, as well as network Chair Lisa Basci, the level of membership response and action during this time was excellent.

From delivery of The Provider's Dozen cookie box at the Capitol, to participation in local public relations and partnership activities with other stakeholders, to direct contacts and visits with legislators – PCPA's membership response must be recognized. Community providers demonstrated their commitment and organization and displayed strength in numbers. PCPA, the LAC, and the network will build on this foundation in 2007 as it returns with a strong budget message and appropriate legislation to address long-term, stable system funding issues.
Inflational Index Legislation Passes House 194–0

House Bill 1813 (the House version of inflationary index legislation for mental health/mental retardation [MH/MR]) passed the House of Representatives January 24 by a vote of 194–0. Congratulations to the MH/MR community for the hard work on this legislative initiative! Information regarding House Bill 1813 is available from the Legislative Tracking device in the Legislative Affairs section of the PCPA web site.

Since the bill passed the House unanimously every state representative should be thanked for his/her support. Please take a moment to call or email your state representative! PCPA thanks the House for this show of solidarity and support for the MH/MR system. The association would like to especially thank all the co-sponsors of House Bill 1813 (listed by last name):


Governor’s Budget Address

The governor’s budget address is scheduled February 7. PCPA plans to send its annual initial review that evening via email and will post it to the web site early February 8. Further information will be shared as it is available.

LAC Update!

Upcoming Meeting

February 23
12:00 – 4:00 p.m.
at the new PCPA Office
Bldg 3, Ste 200
2101 N Front St
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Additional information will be sent to committee members by February 10. This meeting is the LAC’s annual budget preparation meeting. LAC members will be joined by members of the 2006 GRI® class.
Hearing on Dedicated Alcohol Tax

The House Health and Human Services (H&HS) Committee convened a hearing for House Bill 1649 (dedicated alcohol taxes) on February 15 in Harrisburg. The Pennsylvania Cable Network (PCN) carried the hearing on all its affiliate stations. PCPA was proud to be a part of the House and Human Services Committee public hearing.

PCPA thanks those members who took the time to contact members of the H&HS Committee to encourage their attendance at the hearing. From some of the commentary and questions posed at the hearing, it was obvious that members have spent a good deal of time educating their respective legislators on issues of D&A as well as mental health/mental retardation. The following representatives attended either a portion of the hearing or stayed for its entirety:

Katie True (who chaired the hearing), Kerry Benninghoff, Todd Eachus, John Fichter, Pat Fleagle, Mauree Gingrich, Julie Harhart, Nick Kotik, Beverly Mackereth, Fred McIlhattan, Doug Reichley, Chris Ross, Curt Sonney, and Katherine Watson. Rep. Bebko-Jones, the other prime co-sponsor, was ill and unable to attend. She sent opening remarks. PCPA members are encouraged to contact your legislators and thank them if they were present and inform/educate them if they were not.

Rep. Katie True, the prime co-sponsor of the bill, stated that every year advocates for drug and alcohol treatment and prevention have to battle for money in the budget process. This bill establishes a dedicated funding stream for both treatment and prevention of addiction. Rep. True added that it seems to be common sense for government to invest in treatment and prevention as alcohol and other drug abuse is often at the center of so many social ills.

Continued on page 5
Testimony covered aspects of the legislation not only from the perspective of providers and persons in recovery but also from families and other statewide organizations. Legislators were also candid in sharing several constituent stories, issues related to lack of funding for treatment and strong support of the legislation.

In addition to the testimony of Lynn Cooper, PCPA deputy director, several members of the Coalition to Save Lives, Families, and Communities testified in favor of the proposed legislation.

- Christine Munchak, president, PA Parent Teacher Association (PTA), represented a membership of 100,000 and the PTA’s commitment to working for the health, welfare, and education of children and youth.
- Debbie Fowler, president, Remembering ADAM, Inc. testified about her son Adam’s overdose from heroin in 1998.
- Rebecca Shaver, state executive director, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, highlighted increases in alcohol sales and availability and the tragic health, social, and economic problems it has caused.
- Robin Spencer, director, Message Carriers in Allegheny County, represented the voice of recovery.

PCPA will keep members apprised of next steps for House Bill 1649, including any scheduled committee vote. In the meantime, contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs, or Lynn Cooper at the association for questions or concerns. Information regarding House Bill 1649, including a legislative analysis and talking points, can be found in Legislative Tracking on the PCPA web site. Information relative to inflationary index and dedicated alcohol tax legislation is also included in January district lobby month materials.
State Budget Update

Legislative budget hearings convened in Harrisburg during the month of March. Highlights include:

- Legislators from both chambers posed questions/made comments regarding the financial pressures on providers and the need for adequate cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs).

- Comparisons were drawn between recommendations in the governor’s proposed budget for a 4% COLA for hospitals, nursing homes, and managed care organizations (MCOs) and the 2 percent COLA for mental health/mental retardation/drug and alcohol (MH/MR/D&A).

- Secretary of Health Dr. Calvin Johnson asserted his support for the continuum of care for D&A treatment services.

- Secretary of Public Welfare (DPW) Estelle Richman stated that recommendations made during the 2005 Medical Assistance Listening Tour were incorporated into the proposed budget, including expansion of behavioral health HealthChoices, MCO contract incentives, strengthening community-based programs, employment of management efficiencies, and expansion of long-term living services.

There was discussion around eligibility, preferred drug lists, the continuing and changing demographics of Pennsylvania’s population, and DPW’s desire to implement the new nursing home case mix with what some legislators believe is not proper public input. Further information regarding office or program budget updates can be found on PCPA’s web site.

On March 13 the House Republican Caucus introduced House Bill 2499 as their working budget document. House Bill 2499 begins budget discussions with the 2005/06 enacted state budget; in other words, the House is not beginning with the governor’s proposed 2006/07 budget as the working document, as is customary. To access House Bill 2499, visit PCPA’s Legislative Tracking device in the Legislative Affairs section of the web site or log on to www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/BI/ALL/2005/0/HB2499.HTM.
GRI Class of 2006

The GRI Class of 2006 was pleased to host Pete DeCoursey, staff at Capitolwire.com and formerly political editor of The Harrisburg Patriot-News. DeCoursey addressed the class two days after Pennsylvania's tumultuous and stunning primary elections and hours before he was a featured live call-in guest on the PBS program Smart Talk. Following DeCoursey's discussion of Pennsylvania politics and future predictions, he took questions from the class. PCPA thanks DeCoursey for his time and continued commitment to meeting with the GRI and Legislative Affairs Committee. The class also met with GRI Alumni Network co-chairs Lisa Basci, Community Services Group, and John Eliyas, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, who discussed the composition of the network, its efforts and goals, and how current class members can participate in endeavors around legislative and government activities. They also discussed creation and implementation of government relations advocacy groups within member organizations. PCPA's GRI curriculum and training were stressed as integral components for any organization's internal government relations group. Applications for the 2007 GRI class will be available this summer and distributed to all member contact persons. A list is being compiled of individuals who would like to receive an application directly. To ensure your name is on this list please contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs.

Network Plans Outreach to New Legislators

The GRI Alumni Network, in conjunction with the Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC), will embark on an educational and informational effort this summer. Following the May primary elections, it has been determined that some legislative seats will be occupied by freshman legislators. Other seats are considered “open” (the current legislator will not occupy the seat come 2007). While the selected legislator is not yet known, it is a fact that those particular seats will be occupied by newcomers. As a result, the network and LAC will prepare PCPA information to be shared with the candidates. Most packets can be delivered by network and LAC members. However, if a member has a relationship or contact with a candidate, please contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons if you are willing to deliver a packet. Further outreach will be incorporated into PCPA's January 2007 district lobby visit agenda.

Members Join National Council Hill Day

The National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare (NCCBH) held its annual Hill Day May 3. PCPA was represented by several members at this important national event affecting legislation and government activities on a federal level. Participating from PCPA were:

- Jonathan Evans, President/CEO, Safe Harbor Behavioral Health, Erie. Evans is also a member of PCPA’s Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC).
- Paul Cornely, PhD, Director of Training and Government Relations, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Pittsburgh. Cornely is a member of the LAC and will be a graduate of the GRI Class of 2006.
- Barbara Conniff, CEO, Allegheny East MH/MR Center, Inc., Pittsburgh. Conniff is a member of PCPA’s Board of Directors.
- Pete DeCoursey, staff at Capitolwire.com and formerly political editor of The Harrisburg Patriot-News.

Evans, Cornely, and Conniff met with the offices of US Senators Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum, as well as the offices of Congressmen Tim Murphy and Phil English. Other members have participated or have plans to participate in district lobby efforts with federal legislators in conjunction with Hill Day. Special thanks to Christine Michaels and Anne Bell, Westmoreland Case Management and Supports; John Eliyas, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania; Lisa Basci, Community Services Group; Jane Miller, Mercy Behavioral Health; Pete Rubel, Children’s Service Center of Wyoming Valley; and Amanda Hitz and Holly Kricher, Adams-Hanover Counseling Services, Inc. Participation with NCCBH helps to give a Pennsylvania voice to federal behavioral health issues.

If any members are interested in making district visits to federal legislators please contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs, at the association. If PCPA members have not yet taken advantage of a new and exciting opportunity to join NCCBH and would like to do so, contact George J. Kimes, executive director.
What better testament to PCPA’s lobby day than the following two items:

- Sen. Jake Corman (R-Centre/Juniata/Mifflin/Perry/Union), upon opening PCPA’s annual lobby day press conference, promised to move Senate Bill 727 (the Senate version of dedicated alcohol tax legislation) from the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, which he chairs. On June 13 the bill was voted out of the committee unanimously. Corman noted that inflationary index legislation had previously been reported from the committee.

- On June 19 House Bill 1649 (the House version of dedicated alcohol tax legislation) passed the House unanimously (see article on page 6).

Great job PCPA members and supporters! Much credit should be given to the nearly 300 individuals who participated in PCPA’s Lobby Day on June 6 — it was a great day in the Capitol for community providers.

Read *Lobby Day Highlights* on page 4 for more information or visit the PCPA web site to view additional photos of the day’s events.
PCPA’s lobby day agenda focused on the following items:

- Seeking equity for mental health/mental retardation/drug and alcohol (MH/MR/D&A) with other sectors of the public health system (hospitals, nursing homes, managed care organizations),
- Giving strong consideration to long-term funding solutions for the MH/MR/D&A system, and
- Ensuring that legislators exempt MH/MR/D&A services from any possible spending caps/taxpayer bill of rights (TABOR) proposals.

Alan J. Hartl, executive director, Lenape Valley Foundation, and co-chair of the Legislative Affairs Committee, served as the press conference emcee. Hartl wove in the topics in his words of encouragement to the crowd for their efforts during the day’s events. He also told legislators, “We do not want to come back year after year seeking state funding, we need predictability.”

Hartl then introduced Sen. Jake Corman (R-Centre/Juniata/Mifflin/Perry/Union), who does not generally support dedicated funding. Corman stated, “Dedicated funding [is] not always a wise idea for budgeters, but desperate times call for desperate measures. Next Tuesday [June 13], I will bring Senate Bill 727 up for a committee vote.” Corman mentioned that his committee already voted out inflationary index legislation for MH/MR services. He went on to say he understood the frustration of providers coming back annually to request cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). “I know you are here year after year,” said Corman, “because I am at your press conference year after year!”

Sen. Patricia H. Vance (R-Cumberland/York) and Rep. Katie True (R-Lancaster) spoke of the dedicated alcohol tax legislation and their support for mental health/mental retardation (MH/MR) issues. “I want to reiterate that this proposal [dedicated alcohol tax legislation] is fiscally neutral,” said Vance. “It shores up the current D&A funding for specific line items.”

“I am a strong supporter of MH/MR/D&A issues and there are excellent facilities in my district,” said True. “MH/MR/D&A community — I thank you so much for being here today.”

Rep. Kathy Manderino (D-Philadelphia) then led her own cheer with the crowd. She concluded her cheering frenzy by encouraging participants, “Don’t ever let anyone tell you that one person can’t make a difference. One person makes a compelling difference when they have a compelling story to tell.”

Rep. John Yudichak (D-Luzerne) quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Without a rich heart wealth is an ugly beggar.” He went on, “Thank you for fighting for the millions that cannot fight for themselves. It is our duty as legislators to ensure those needing MH/MR/D&A services get the services they need to have a better standard of living and quality of life.”

Questions regarding Lobby Day may be directed to Melissa Simmons at the association. Information and talking points regarding the agenda topics can be found on PCPA’s web site.
Sine Die Provides Legislative Opportunity

November 30 marks the end of this two-year legislative session in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. This November the season on Capitol Hill is referred to as sine die — Latin for without death. All bills that have not been passed and made law by November 30 die; that is, in order for the issue to be considered again by the General Assembly the bill must be reintroduced during the next session (and the legislative process for that bill begins anew).

PCPA believes this is the best chance to have the long-term funding legislation — both inflationary index (House Bill 1813 and Senate Bill 1006) and dedicated alcohol tax (House Bill 1649 and Senate Bill 727) — passed by the General Assembly and enacted into law. It is a well-known fact that nearly one in five legislators will be “new” or “freshmen” members in January 2007. As well, legislative leadership will change and there is a strong possibility that, as a result, legislative committee chairmen will change. This means that state associations, organizations, lobbyists, and individuals will be acclimating to a new environment. So, too, will legislators new to the legislative process and leaders and committee chairmen coming into new roles.

PCPA will embark on legislative action efforts during September and October. As part of this effort, all members will be asked to contact their respective legislators (but concentrate on the Senate members) and insist on passage of both inflationary index and dedicated alcohol tax legislation. Both pieces of legislation have passed the House unanimously in their House versions and are now in the Senate. Both Senate versions of the legislation also reside in the Senate.

The most important element to this action effort — besides contacting the legislator directly — will be for members to follow up with PCPA and provide feedback. A feedback form will be available, but members may also simply email or call Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs. It is important that PCPA can track and monitor member outreach as well as provide contact information to legislative leadership.

Educational Outreach to Candidates Begins

The GRI© Alumni Network and the Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC) began an educational and informational effort for legislative candidates in August. Many new legislators will occupy seats in the General Assembly following elections. The network and LAC prepared PCPA packets to share with candidates. If a member has a relationship or contact with a candidate, please contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs, if you are willing to deliver a packet. Further outreach will be incorporated into the January 2007 district lobby visit agenda.

It should be noted that the new two-year legislative session will begin in January 2007. Members will receive new legislative directories in spring 2007. A special thanks to those members who have shared information regarding legislative candidates as well as to those members who have registered to deliver packets. Your help is necessary in making this educational effort successful!
Movement for Long-Term Funding Legislation

As Provider News goes to print, there is serious discussion in the Capitol that long-term funding legislation (inflationary index — House Bill 1813/Senate Bill 1006 and dedicated alcohol tax — House Bill 1649/Senate Bill 727) has potential for movement this session. PCPA believes that, if the bills are to move, it would have to be prior to the November elections. Therefore, the Legislative Affairs Committee set September 26 as a Targeted Bill Action day at the Capitol. The sole purpose of the event was to lobby for passage of the legislation.

It should be noted that, while mention is made of the companion Senate legislation, primary focus is on the House bills because the House has passed both House bills unanimously. If the Senate were to pass the House bills, there would be one less step toward becoming law. In addition to sharing brief information with legislators/legislative staff during the event, members were asked to deliver a box of The Providers Dozen cookies (a box containing 11 cookies) to all members of the Senate and members of House leadership (just in case any legislation lands back in the House). The Providers Dozen box was missing one cookie...because community providers are missing proper funding.

Members should refer to any Legislative Alerts or the bill tracking device in the Legislative Affairs section of the PCPA web site for updated bill information. Contact Melissa DiSanto Simmons, director of legislative affairs, at the association with questions or concerns.

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Legislative Forum Is October 12

The success of last year’s two-part legislative forum during the annual conference will continue for the 2006 session. Panelists for the workshop featuring legislative staff (9:00 – 10:30 a.m.) are:

- **Beth Balaban**, House Appropriations Committee/policy analyst
- **Jamie Buchenauer**, House Children and Youth Committee/executive director
- **H. Scott Johnson**, Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee/executive director
- **Ron Jumper**, Senate Judiciary Committee/Democratic counsel
- **Janelle Lynch**, House Health and Human Services Committee/research analyst

Those involved in the legislator portion of the workshop (10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.) include:

- **Sen. Jake Corman**,
- **Sen. Jay Costa, Jr.**,
- **Rep. George T. Kenney, Jr.**, and

Members are encouraged to attend this double session at the conference, taking advantage of the opportunity to pose questions directly to key legislative staff and legislators regarding community provider issues.
Late October 27, PCPA received formal word that Governor Edward G. Rendell vetoed House Bill 1813 (inflationary index for mental health/mental retardation [MH/MR]). Needless to say, this is a major disappointment for the MH/MR field. Following a tremendous amount of advocacy and legislative effort, House Bill 1813 passed the House unanimously (twice) and passed the Senate on October 16. House Bill 1813 was then presented to the governor on October 18 for his signature.

On October 27 Governor Rendell signed the veto of House Bill 1813. While the bill will return to the legislature for a possible veto override (which requires a two-thirds vote from the House and Senate each), it is unlikely that the legislative calendar will allow enough time for House Bill 1813 to become law.

PCPA, along with other statewide stakeholders, will advance inflationary index legislation again in the 2007/08 legislative session. While the bill was rejected by the governor, there were many who should be recognized for their strong support and commitment to this bill including:

- **Rep. George T. Kenney, Jr.** (Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee) — prime sponsor of House Bill 1813,
- **Sen. Ted Erickson** — prime sponsor of Senate Bill 1006 (companion legislation to House Bill 1813),
- **Sen. Jake Corman** (Chair, Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee) — for his leadership on this issue in the Senate, and
- The members of the MH/MR Coalition.

Most importantly, PCPA members are to be commended for their dedication and commitment which was evident every step of the way in advancing this legislation. Countless members attended lobby days, sent letters and emails, made phone calls, and visited legislators in their home districts in support of the much needed funding increase for MH/MR programs. This work was not in vain. It will serve as the foundation as the legislation is advanced in the 2007/08 session.
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Dedicated Alcohol Tax Initiative — New Goal: Next Session

Senate leadership staff notified the association October 18 that House Bill 1649 (dedicated alcohol tax initiative) would not be considered before the close of this session. Last minute opposition and competing interests (tourism/the arts) held up movement of the bill. The short time frame of this session made it impossible to move through the final stages to enactment.

Needless to say, PCPA is extremely disappointed. However, the association is proud of how far the bill has come in such a short period of time. Legislative leaders and PCPA will return with the bill next session and all look forward to securing funding for these essential drug and alcohol (D&A) services.

Special thanks go to the countless PCPA members who have contacted their legislators to advocate and educate regarding House Bill 1649. The strength of association membership was clearly demonstrated. PCPA’s appreciation also extends to a number of hard working, major supporters that helped to get the initiative so far: Reps. Katie True (R-Lancaster) and Linda Bebko-Jones (D-Erie), prime sponsors; Rep. George T. Kenney, Jr. (R-Philadelphia), chair of the House Health and Human Services Committee; Sens. Patricia H. Vance (R-Cumberland/York) and Jay Costa, Jr. (D-Allegheny), prime sponsors of Senate Bill 727 (companion legislation to House Bill 1649), and Jake Corman, chair of the Public Health and Welfare Committee; legislative staff Mark Ryan, chief of staff to Vance and Stacy Gromlich, former House Health and Human Services Committee staff; members of the Coalition to Save Lives, Families and Communities, the 100 organizations that signed on to the resolution, and Morgan Plant, PCPA lobbyist.

Plans are already underway to secure this legislation next year. PCPA was advised early in the process that it would likely take more than one session to achieve passage. The coalition will be broadened and strengthened, new materials developed, and legislative advocacy enhanced. The work that has been done will not be lost; it is an outstanding foundation on which to build.

PAC Success at Conference Increases

Alan J. Hartl, chair of the Pennsylvania Community Providers Political Action Committee (PCP PAC), is pleased to report that the PAC surpassed its 2006 conference goal of $5,000. To date, the total raised is $5,007. That number may increase based on final contributions from teams that participated in the GRI Alumni Network® bowling tournament. In addition to the bowling tournament, funds were realized from the Silent Auction, Silent Scramble, and PACPot initiatives. Hartl extends a special thanks to members of the Legislative Affairs Committee and network for their hard work and dedication to the planning and implementation of these activities.

A special thanks to all who donated an item to the auction: Aldie Foundation, Allegheny East MH/HR, Barber National Institute, Community Services Group, CBHNP, Delta-T Group, Dickinson Mental Health Center, Eagleville Hospital, Family Services of Western PA, Home Nursing Agency, Keystone Human Services, George Kimes, Lenape Valley Foundation, Northwest Human Services, Connell O’Brien, Morgan Plant, Pressley Ridge, Pyramid Healthcare, Safe Harbor Behavioral Health, Tadiso, Inc., The Vargas Family, David and Cathy Webster, Wesley Spectrum, and Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic. The GRI Alumni Network would like to extend a special thanks to its conference sponsor This End Up Furniture Co., Inc., and especially to Fabio Ruberto.

©2006. This newsletter is written by the Pennsylvania Community Providers Association (PCPA) for the mental health, mental retardation, and addictive disease communities. This informational newsletter is published monthly. Deadline for publication is the third Friday of every month.

Provider News

Executive Director
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The Right Thing

"I think we are done." So came the email from lobbyist Morgan Plant signifying that we had not been successful in getting a House vote to override Governor Rendell’s veto of HB 1813. The legislative session was rapidly approaching an end and time had run out on a valiant effort on the part of PCPA and several members of the MH/MR Coalition. Ms. Plant’s words signaled the end to this long battle to provide a stable funding base for MH/MR services. Political expediency trumped the rightness of our cause.

As most of you are aware, PCPA has worked very hard over the current legislative session to secure a stable funding base for mental health/mental retardation (MH/MR), and drug and alcohol (D&A) services. We came very close when we were able to secure almost unanimous passage of HB 1813 in both the House and the Senate. This legislation called for the governor to include an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for MH/MR services in his budget. This COLA request was keyed to the Home Health Market Basket index. As discussed previously, the legislation was vetoed in October.

Much of the success of the passage of HB 1813 can be attributed to the united efforts of the MH/MR Coalition. When time came to push to override the governor’s veto, the coalition was unable to continue to speak with a unified voice. PCPA took an early position demanding a vote on an override. I was proud to stand along with families and consumers at a press conference called by The Arc of Pennsylvania and United Cerebral Palsy. These members of the coalition were among the first to call for an override. I extend a special thanks to these groups for their continuing efforts to improve the system.

Some questioned the use of “political capital” to fight the battle for an override. Pushing to override the actions of the recently and overwhelmingly re-elected governor seemed to carry some risks. Our members, our Legislative Affairs Committee, and our lobbyist unanimously agreed that we needed to take this final step and fight for an override. It needed to be done because, as with the legislation itself, it was the right thing to do. We had come a long way and to give up and not make a final effort would have diminished the efforts we had made. I thank those of you in PCPA who supported us along the way and who urged us to take this fight to the conclusion.

Our advocacy for House Bill 1813 grew from our inability to secure stable and consistent funding for our system. Just as hospitals, nursing homes, and managed care organizations have mechanisms in place for annual increases, we in this major Medicaid community safety-net system were attempting to do the same. As the battle over HB 1813 ends, the next battle begins. We will renew our efforts for stable D&A funding through legislation to provide dedicated taxes for D&A treatment and prevention. The upcoming budget process must recognize the fragility of our service system. We must achieve equity with the major components of the health system.

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This column represents my opinion, not necessarily that of the association.
Legislature Elects Leadership

At press time, ballots were still being counted in the 156th House district in Chester County. Additionally, court challenges are pending in other districts. Therefore, majority control of the state House of Representatives is not yet known. Despite this, both Democrats and Republicans caucused November 14 to select their slate of leaders. Should it be determined that the Democrats have captured control of the House, leadership re-elections are likely to be scheduled. The Senate Democrats and Republicans caucused November 20 to select their leaders. With both the incumbent President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader in the Senate defeated in primary elections, it was known that there would be leadership changes in the Senate Republican caucus. Elected leaders for 2007/08 are noted below.

2007/08 Republican House Leaders
John M. Perzel Speaker
Samuel H. Smith Majority Leader
David Argall Majority Whip
Sandra Major Caucus Chairman
Merle Phillips Caucus Administrator
Jerry Stern Caucus Secretary
Michael Turzai Caucus Policy Chairman
Mario Civera Appropriations Committee Chairman

2007/08 Democratic House Leaders
H. William DeWeese Minority Leader
Keith McCall Minority Whip
Mark Cohen Caucus Chairman
Frank Dermody Caucus Secretary
Todd Eachus Caucus Policy Chairman
Dan Surra Caucus Administrator
Dwight Evans Appropriations Committee Chairman

2007/08 Republican Senate Leaders
Joe Scarnati President Pro Tempore
Dominic Pileggi Majority Leader
Jane C. Orie Majority Whip
Mike Waugh Caucus Chairman
Bob Robbins Caucus Secretary
Gibson Armstrong Appropriations Committee Chairman

2007/08 Democratic Senate Leaders
Robert Mellow Minority Leader
Michael A. O’Pake Minority Whip
Jay Costa Caucus Chairman
Gerald LaValle Caucus Secretary
Vincent Fumo Appropriations Committee Chairman

Legislative Action Outstanding

A special thanks to PCPA’s Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC), GRI© Alumni Network, and Legislative Email List for outstanding leadership efforts around legislative action for House Bills 1813 and 1649 during this sine die session. Spearheaded by LAC Co-chairs Alan J. Hartl and Steve Christian-Michaels, as well as network Chair Lisa Basci, the level of membership response and action during this time was excellent.

From delivery of The Provider’s Dozen cookie box at the Capitol, to participation in local public relations and partnership activities with other stakeholders, to direct contacts and visits with legislators — PCPA’s dedicated membership response should be recognized. Community providers demonstrated their commitment and organization and displayed strength in numbers. PCPA, the LAC, and the network will build on this foundation in 2007 as it comes back with a strong budget message and appropriate legislation to address long-term, stable system funding issues.