News for Immediate Release

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Department of Aging Honors Five Advocates at Joint Conference

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania Department of Aging today awarded five Pennsylvanians for assisting and advocating for older Pennsylvanians at the Pennsylvania Ombudsman and Protective Services Annual Conference in Hershey.

Area Agencies on Aging submitted nominations of protective service workers and Ombudsman to the department. From the nominations received, two Ombudsmen and three protective services workers were chosen to receive the awards:

- **Berks County:** Lisette Mendez-Rodriquez, staff Ombudsman; assisted an individual who has limited mobility in relocating to a facility closer to where the individual's mother resides;
- **Lancaster County:** Bill Kelley, volunteer Ombudsman; serves as an advocate on behalf of older consumers of long-term care services, trains other volunteers, and gathers data for the department's Bureau of Advocacy;
- **Huntingdon County:** Nancy German and Scott Imler, protective services workers; investigated a consumer who was physically abused and financially exploited by his daughter, moved the consumer to his son's residence, and were instrumental in securing $113,000 of restitution from the daughter;
- **Somerset County:** Edyth Zschoche, protective services worker; assisted a consumer who lived in a rodent-infested home with no running water by finding resources in the community to clean and create a safe living environment in the individual's home and re-establish a water supply.

This is the first time the department has combined the annual Ombudsman and Protective Services conferences. This year's theme "Creating Safety Net Communities" brought together 20 organizations and more than 400 attendees.

Department of Aging and Area Agencies on Aging protective services workers provide older Pennsylvanians protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and abandonment.

For more information on the Ombudsman or Protective Services programs, visit www.aging.state.pa.us. If you suspect elder abuse, please call: 1-800-490-8505.

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