



PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

PHFA's Housing  
Services Department  
**Best Practices**

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**Schwenckfeld Manor/Family Virtual Visits**

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**Categories:** Access to Services

**Outcomes:** With free access to high-tech equipment, residents at Schwenckfeld Manor now have:

- The potential to access remote service providers and service coordinators.
- The ability to have "face to face" visits with family and friends in different parts of the county and the world.
- Increased connections and socialization.

**Program Components:**

Family Virtual Visits (FVV) is a company based in California that provides live, full-motion video "visits" for seniors and their families. The residents of Schwenckfeld Manor are able to take advantage of this service at no cost to them.

**Housing Development:** A 3 stage development that includes 224 units of one bedroom and efficiency apartments. 4<sup>th</sup> stage, Schwenckfeld Terrace, is expected to open in 2008.

**Management Agent:**  
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Schwenckfeld Manor and FVV provide the equipment, training and technical support to make the program easy to use and operate. Residents visit on a big screen TV in the privacy of the community's "Family Virtual Visits Center" with their family who is connected through the company's website and a webcam on their personal computer. The system is completely hands-free for residents, making a virtual visit easier than talking on the phone!

In addition to the ability to connect with family and friends, Family Virtual Visits has the capacity to link residents to remote service providers as well. The PA Department of Aging has initiated a pilot program using Family Virtual Visits to link aging professionals with the elderly in several rural counties of northern PA. As this technology expands, it will become easier for residents to receive monitoring and consultation visits from their healthcare professionals without the burden of traveling to their offices.



**Background:**

Schwenckfeld Manor is located in Lansdale, PA, and is home to more than 225 elderly (62+) residents in one-bedroom and efficiency subsidized apartments. Schwenckfeld Manor first opened its doors in 1974, with expansions in 1979 and 1989. Schwenckfeld Terrace is scheduled to open in 2008. Management is a strong proponent of on-site service delivery and employs nurses as service coordinators. In addition to providing traditional information, referral and case management, the service coordinators also informally observe changes in residents' status, provide health education and advise residents when they should call the doctor.

**RESULTS**

Word has spread quickly through Schwenckfeld Manor about Family Virtual Visits. Dozens of residents have expressed interest and encouraged their families to sign up. Several residents have begun visiting regularly with family across the country.

**Investment in Family Virtual Visits:**

Initial costs for the technology are approximately \$4500 per site with annual costs of about \$1500 thereafter. Schwenckfeld Manor is one of more than 50 communities in 16 states to use the technology, but only the second affordable housing community in the country to do so.

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For more information,  
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