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December 7, 2015

Wolf Administration Continues Efforts to Increase Community Living Availability

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf was joined by Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Ted Dallas today in announcing that the commonwealth has successfully transitioned the first Pennsylvanian into an apartment, made possible by the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) program.

“My cabinet has worked since day one to provide the best possible home healthcare for Pennsylvania,” said Governor Wolf. “Our hope is that we’re able to provide access to housing that enables more Pennsylvanians to live independently and safely in the community.”

“For thousands of Pennsylvanians, finding a stable, affordable place to live is one of their biggest worries in life,” said Secretary Dallas. “This is an even bigger challenge for someone with a serious mental illness, an intellectual or physical disability. Today we’re able to make someone’s load a little lighter.”

DHS and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) were awarded \$8.6 million in March 2015 and \$5.7 million in 2013 to prevent individuals with disabilities from being unnecessarily institutionalized or falling into homelessness. The funding for this demonstration grant was provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”).

Section 811 PRA provides an innovative housing solution for residents with disabilities. This grant provides rental subsidies for permanent affordable rental housing and ensures that needed supportive services are available to extremely low-income persons with disabilities, many of whom are hoping to transition out of institutional settings back to the community. The award is part of \$150 million in rental assistance to 25 State Housing Agencies.

“Today’s focus is on our success in housing our first person under the Section 811 program, but it’s worth noting that all Pennsylvanians benefit from this program,” said PHFA Executive Director and CEO Brian A. Hudson Sr. “People with disabilities are supported in their efforts to live independently, and all Pennsylvanians are saved costs when we can avoid institutional housing. This is a terrific example of the individual and the community both benefiting from a housing program.”

The grant reinforces the guiding principles of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* and the landmark 1999 Supreme Court ruling in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, helping states and local governments to provide services in the most integrated settings appropriate to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

“The grants received will enable us to support approximately 400 households over the course of the next four years,” said Dallas. “A lot of lives will be positively impacted by this collaborative

effort, and we'll be able to divert people from institutions, while providing the support they need and reduce costs.”

The Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program enables individuals to transition from nursing homes, other institutions or from homelessness into healthier supportive housing.

Applicants must have a disability, be age 18 to 61, be eligible for Medicaid and be referred by their Local Lead Agency. The Local Lead Agency referral process will connect them with a participating property with a vacancy. Acceptance into the program gives the person independent living and the security of a permanent place to call home.

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