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Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency raises concerns over shutdown

Government shut-down could halt critical nurse-based home visiting services

MINNEAPOLIS – (June 20, 2011) – In the shadow of a pending state government shutdown, the nonprofit Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency (MVNA) is seeking creative solutions to protect the thousands of struggling families and fragile elderly they serve. The state shutdown could require MVNA to stop serving government-funded clients with significant health care risks, including ill and vulnerable newborns and children, pregnant and parenting teens, disabled adults, frail seniors, and individuals who are living the final weeks and days of their lives.

“A state shutdown for the population of individuals served by MVNA is truly unconscionable. These are some of the neediest people in our society, and our failure to protect and serve them goes against our Public Health values,” said Jen Van Liew, CEO.

The Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency has asked its employees to prepare for a potential reduction or elimination of programs and services. Without these nursing services, many clients would no longer be able to remain independent in their homes. Emergency room visits and clinic visits would inevitably increase at local clinics and hospitals. For many of MVNA’s disabled, frail and vulnerable seniors, there may be no alternative but nursing home placement or prolonged hospital stays. All of these alternatives are more costly than home-based health care services. “In the end, much of these increased costs would be passed on to taxpayers and consumers,” noted Rob Grunewald, MVNA board chair and associate economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

The services that MVNA provides as a safety-net to the community should be considered essential; thousands of lives are dependent on MVNA nurses caring for the sick, disabled and dying in our community. We hope our elected officials will provide solutions so that MVNA clients will continue to receive cost-effective in-home health care.

The Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency (MVNA) is a nonprofit, Medicare certified home health and public health care provider in the Twin Cities. Each year MVNA provides

more than \$1 million of unreimbursed care to uninsured or underinsured individuals and families who would otherwise not receive nursing care. MVNA provides home care for infants in the first days of life, to people in the final stages of life.

Hospice of the Twin Cities (HOTC), a subsidiary company of MVNA, is a nonprofit Medicare certified, community based hospice program. HOTC is based in Plymouth.

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