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News for Immediate Release

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Auditor General DePasquale Releases Guide to Help Citizens Make Informed Decisions About Choosing Nursing Homes for Loved Ones

Guide follows July performance audit of Department of Health's oversight of nursing homes

PITTSBURGH – As a follow-up to a recently released audit of the Department of Health's oversight of nursing homes, Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today released the five-page "Citizens Guide for Informed Decision-making."

"This guide should help people understand what information is available to them when they are searching for nursing home care for loved ones," DePasquale said. "A wealth of information is available, especially online, but people must learn where to find it and what to look for."

Released in July, [the audit](#) showed that deficiencies in DOH's oversight could be affecting the quality of care that nursing homes provide to their residents. It was conducted after DOH began listening to complaints about its oversight of nursing homes and requested that the Department of the Auditor General investigate.

The audit, which covered Jan. 1, 2014, to Oct. 31, 2015, identified three issue areas:

- Inadequate review of nurse staffing levels,
- Complaint handling, and
- Sanctions against poor-performing facilities.

DePasquale commended DOH leadership and staff in July for taking a proactive stance to improve its operations.

"This audit is an example of how the process should work," DePasquale said. "As our team began finding deficient practices, DOH immediately responded by implementing changes."

The 91-page audit contained 13 findings — the most of any special performance audit since DePasquale took office in January 2013 — and 23 recommendations.

Among topics covered in the citizens guide:

- Differences between nursing homes and assisted living/personal care facilities
- Key concepts and terminology related to nursing home oversight
- Nursing home staffing — issues to understand
- How to file a complaint about a nursing home
- Where to find additional information

The "Citizens Guide for Informed Decision-making" is available online at: www.PaAuditor.gov.

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