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Continuum Joins National Organizations to Sponsor Ninth Annual Consumer Protection Week, February 4-10

Tips for Finding the Right Home Care Provider

St. Louis, January 30, 2007 – There is a disturbing trend of increasing elder abuse. Recent findings show a 19.7 percent increase¹ in abuse and 89.3 percent of that occurred in a domestic setting¹. Continuum, the preferred choice for care managed home care and advice and planning for care, has joined a group of federal, state and local government agencies and national consumer advocacy organizations to launch the ninth annual National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), February 4-10, 2007. NCPW highlights consumer education efforts in the fight against fraud in communities across the nation. By collaborating with NCPW's national organizers, Continuum is encouraging everyone to read up and reach out to be an informed consumer. By gathering and sharing information, consumers – and their friends and families – can be more confident, savvy and safe in the marketplace.

"Continuum is proud to be a part of this year's National Consumer Protection Week campaign, along with our local consumer community," said founder and president, Barth Holohan, MSW, MBA. "Consumers are our most effective partners in this effort. We encourage everyone to read up and reach out, learn how to deter fraud and deception in the marketplace – and tell others."

Choosing a home care provider raises many concerns. To ensure the consumer makes an educated decision on selecting the best home care provider, the right questions should be asked. Continuum offers the following guidelines.

- Check background information
 - How long has the agency been providing private duty home care?
 - What kind of agency is it - home care, employment, nurse registry/broker?
 - Get references and verify them
 - What kind of reputation does the provider have in the community?

- Verify the agency or provider's services
 - Is there a care professional that, along with the client and family, develops an individualized plan of care?
 - How are emergencies handled after normal business hours?
 - How often are services monitored?
 - Does the agency employ a full time nurse, social worker or other qualified professional to make regular visits to the client's home?
 - Will you be required to sign a contract for services?
 - Are costs estimated up front?

- Verify the agency or provider's human resources operations
 - Are employees given a thorough criminal background check?
 - Who employs the caregiver?
 - Does the agency manage all payroll and employee-related matters and adhere to state and federal guidelines in its employment practices?
 - Do they also use independent contractors? If so, who employs the person and pays mandated taxes and withholdings in this case? How do they differentiate between the employees and the independent contractors?
 - Are references checked?
 - How does the agency screen and select caregivers prior to an assignment?

About Continuum

Continuum, locally owned and operated by Barth Holohan, has been helping people of all ages with care needs in the St. Louis area since 2002. With services ranging from care managed home care, emergency medical alert systems, care planning/care management, bill paying and supportive services in retirement communities, Continuum truly offers Care for Life. Their expert staff is personally matched with families to partner with them and guide them through any care need. Visit ContinuumCare.com or call (314) 863-9912 for more information.

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¹ 2004 Survey of State Adult Protective Services (APS), National Center on Elder Abuse, Washington, DC.