



AAPT
American Association of Psychiatric Technicians

May 18, 2010

Dear Senator:

We are writing as we seek a response from your state's consumer-safety oversight agency on the regulation, training and oversight of direct-care staff.

This January, the American Association of Psychiatric Technicians sent a simple survey to your consumer-safety agency asking about training, education and regulation of direct-care staff (i.e., psychiatric technicians, direct-care workers, mental health aides, etc.) in your state who provide daily care services for people with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses.

To date, your state's office in charge of consumer safety has not responded. This information is extremely vital to us as we seek to provide the highest quality of care for our most vulnerable individuals: Americans with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses.

AAPT frequently receives questions from interested parties asking where to go to school, who is hiring, and what vetting or background checks – if any – are performed. But in a larger sense, AAPT also through this survey is seeking to find out why more states do not formally train, oversee and regulate men and women who work with our most fragile members of society.

While AAPT offers a popular voluntary certification program – which allows employers some gauge of a potential direct-care worker's experience and qualifications – voluntary certification is far inferior to mandatory formal education, training and licensure. California, Colorado, Kansas and Arkansas currently are the only states that have education, regulation, oversight and licensure programs for direct-care staff. There currently is no nationally recognized testing and licensure (such as for a Licensed Vocational Nurse/Licensed Practical Nurse) or even widespread state regulation of these workers providing 24/7 care to our most vulnerable populations.

For the safety and well-being of your constituents, all states require formal education, regulation and licensure of people who trim hair, sell homes, fix cars and do taxes. Please help us as we seek the same requirements and oversight for those who care – day in and day out – for vulnerable Americans with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses.

Any assistance you could provide on this survey or our larger related issues of concern would be greatly appreciated. A response by **June 30** would be ideal.

Respectfully,

**Tony Myers, President/Licensed California Psychiatric Technician
American Association of Psychiatric Technicians**

**Robin Sims, President/Parent
VOR: Voice of the Retarded**