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NEWS RELEASE

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Whitman Renews Support for Home Health Aide Background Checks

NJ Gov. Christie Whitman today called for background checks on all home health aides licensed by the state. Under current law only newly licensed home health aides must pass a background check. Mandatory background checks for all home health aides was recommended in the Elder Fraud Task Force report of February 1997.

"We took an important first step when we required background checks of all newly licensed home health aides. However, the current exemption of previously licensed aides from the required background checks has resulted in a loophole that should be closed," Gov. Whitman said.

"The staff at the Division of Consumer Affairs and at the State Board of Nursing have again urged that this loophole be closed and I continue to believe that it is the right thing to do," she said.

"I look forward to working with the members of the Legislature, my Advisory Council on Elder Care and others to craft legislation that closes this loophole and bolsters the confidence and security of senior citizens who rely in ever-increasing numbers on home health aides," she said.

The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs' Elder Fraud Task Force report of February 1997 found that, "New Jersey's senior citizens find themselves relying to a far greater degree than in the past on home health aides. But problems with home health aides posed one of the most serious problems brought to the attention of the Task Force."