

Press Release

For further information contact:
Stanton C. Lawson
Co-owner, CFO
Sequoia Senior Solutions, Inc.
(707) 763-6600

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Certification For Caregivers Raises The Bar For In-Home Senior Care

Petaluma, California, November 4, 2004 – The senior care industry has grown dramatically in recent years along with the number of seniors needing care. Some seniors move into assisted living facilities or skilled nursing facilities as chronic conditions begin to affect their daily lives. Many more, however, are choosing to remain in their own homes with the help of companion caregivers. But the quality of caregivers can vary greatly, and because the job is only supervised periodically, if at all, home care comes with a set of uncertainties all its own.

Independent caregivers- also called personal care attendants, homemakers, caregivers, and companions- typically perform housekeeping, laundry, meal preparation and errand services. Some provide personal care assistance. A growing number of them are the sole custodians of seniors suffering from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. So the responsibility each caregiver bears can be very great. In contrast, however, the occupational characteristics as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics are characterized by low skill requirements and high emotional demands. Frequently, independent caregivers rely only on care experience they gained while caring for an ailing family member. Certainly personal experience can vary greatly.

According to Gabriella Ambrosi, owner and CEO of Sequoia Senior Solutions, Inc., "Training, or lack of it, is the issue. We've always insisted on a standardized training program for our caregivers. But we're an exception. Many companion care companies, some of them franchises, offer very limited caregiver training. And some provide no skills training at all to their employees. That's a scary situation when you are hiring someone to take care of yourself or a loved one." Most care agencies depend on the personal experience each new caregiver brings with him/herself. Without a training program, there's no predictable skill standard. The only consistent measure of skill is among state certified nursing assistants and home health aides,

most of whom work in hospitals, facilities and home health companies. It's clear, however, that most seniors prefer to remain at home and will rely on companion caregivers for ongoing assistance. So what is the solution?

The Senior's Choice, Incorporated, an international leader in the companion care industry has an answer--a new level of senior companion caregiver, the **Certified Companion Aide (CCA)**[®]. Steve Everhart, President and founder of The Senior's Choice stated, "The mission is simple, we want to ensure the best home care possible for seniors – they've earned it, they deserve it. The **CCA**[®] will stand head and shoulders above standard agency caregivers in both education and skill. And the type of person drawn to the CCA is big-hearted and committed to exemplary service to seniors."

In the new program, caregivers will study 19 core subjects relating to senior care and must pass a battery of tests to acquire the coveted certification. The process prepares caregivers to consistently and professionally perform exceptional in-home care for seniors who choose to live independently at home for as long as possible.

"We're very excited to be part of this groundbreaking opportunity. It's only available to companion care companies that belong to The Senior's Choice member network. Our caregivers are great people who give tirelessly of themselves to help seniors. Now they'll have something that shows their level of dedication. The caregivers benefit by the additional education and our senior clients will certainly benefit through the CCAs' service. At the heart of it, that's what counts," Ambrosi said. The program is being rolled out exclusively among Senior's Choice member agencies throughout the US and Canada and raises the bar for companion care nationwide. The first CCA's are expected to be ready for service locally by January 2005. For more information about Certified Companion Aides, Sequoia Senior Solutions can be reached at (707) 763-6600.

About Sequoia Senior Solutions, Inc.

Sequoia Senior Solutions, Inc. provides in-home care to seniors throughout Sonoma, Marin, and Napa Counties, helping them to continue living independently in their own homes for as long as possible. Services include companion care, assistance with bathing and grooming, meal preparation, errand running, personal transportation, and more. Sequoia Senior Solutions provides the perfect answer for seniors who aren't ready to leave their home for an institutional setting, but need support to remain at home due to illness or chronic conditions.