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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **National Heroes of the Year Recognized by BAYADA Home Health Care** *Four Health Care Professionals Receive the Company's Highest Honor*

MOUNT LAUREL, NJ—June 4, 2012—A registered nurse (RN), licensed practical nurse (LPN), physical therapist (PT), and home health aide (HHA) were named national Hero of the Year for their respective practices by BAYADA Home Health Care, a leading provider of home health care and hospice services to people of all ages. Each hero has a unique story about how their care made a significant difference in the lives of an individual or family faced with illness or disability. Family members of the heroes watched as each care professional received individual recognition before more than 1,600 employees at an awards ceremony, hosted in Washington, DC on Saturday, June 2.

"John Robinson is my hero because he opened the door for me to live again," said Collette Neal, a client who needed care from Robinson due to an upper arm fracture that resulted from a fall. Neal was facing multiple challenges in her life when she met Robinson.

"At the time I was very despondent," Neal remembered. "I had just lost two children, and I was like a zombie. I was so emotionally upset. Then I fell, and John came into my life as my therapist. I was in a great deal of pain. It's not easy doing exercises, and at that point, I really didn't care one way or another. He kept my spirits up. John was there for me when I wanted to give up."

Robinson's compassion comes from his many years as a caregiver for his own son who had disabilities. His exceptional care and kindness have been recognized previously with the national Lucy Blair Service Award from the American Physical Therapy Association and an annual award in his name given by Arcadia University. Exhibiting the nature that surely has contributed to his success, Robinson humbly noted that the best part of receiving the honor was having his family by his side at the ceremony.

Sharon Levengood, the mother of a pediatric client cared for by LPN Hero of the Year Lori McMillan, also attended the ceremony. Levengood's son was born with lissencephaly, a terminal brain disorder that displays symptoms such as difficulty swallowing, failure to thrive, muscle spasms, and seizures. Because of her son's disorder and the need for around-the-clock care, Levengood had not worked for the first seven years of her son's life.

"I went back to work a few years ago, and when I walked out that door for the first time, I had no regrets," shared Levengood. "I knew that Lori knew my son just like I did. Her nursing skills are excellent. She knew when my son was beginning to become ill and would begin any treatment needed with ease and confidence so he did not become hospitalized. Lori is my hero

because she came into our home eight years ago and brought joy to my son and happiness to our home.”

Laura Shoff, whose son Matthew is in the care of RN Hero of the Year Deirdre Dutka, can relate. “When having someone come into your home and work with your child, reliability is very important—especially to the parents,” said Shoff. “I always feel very comfortable when Deirdre is with Matthew when we’re not here—and that’s a great feeling to have.”

Shoff’s son is 27 years old, nonverbal, non-ambulatory, and has cerebral palsy. His condition is also complicated by a seizure disorder, gastrojejunostomy tube, respiration insufficiencies, and curvature of the spine, requiring 24-hour care.

“Deirdre is my hero because she doesn’t just bring out the best in Matthew in his health and his happiness, but she brings it out in the rest of the family by just working with all of us with kindness and compassion,” Shoff added.

HHA Hero of the Year Maria Ortega de Rivera has been providing exceptional care to Staff Sergeant Cory Remsburg, a combat-wounded veteran who has undergone numerous brain and eye surgeries, and spent more than a year in hospitals in the US and overseas.

Remsburg’s mother, Annie shared, “Maria is the most professional, reliable, and caring HHA we have ever had the pleasure of working with. She always has a smile on her face, and my son looks forward to seeing her.”

Leslie Cook, whose son Trevor benefits from Ortega de Rivera’s care, agreed. “Maria walked in with a sense of confidence and I knew my son was safe with her,” she said. “In the stressful life that we live, one day to the next, you never know what is going to happen. You can always depend on Maria to be there and do an excellent job. She treats Trevor like her own son.”

Established in 1999, the Hero on the Home Front Program recognizes care professionals who consistently demonstrate the BAYADA core values of compassion, excellence, and reliability. Each quarter, local heroes are nominated by their clients and peers, and the award recipients are honored in a local celebration. From the local heroes, division heroes are chosen. And finally, a national hero is selected for four disciplines, and each of the four is recognized at the annual awards ceremony.

Watch the heroes’ clients share what makes a hero at [www.bayada.com/education\\_heroes2012.asp](http://www.bayada.com/education_heroes2012.asp).

*Founded in 1975 by J. Mark Baiada, BAYADA Home Health Care provides nursing, rehabilitative, therapeutic, hospice, and assistive care services to children, adults, and seniors in the comfort of their homes. Headquartered in suburban Philadelphia, BAYADA employs more than 17,000 nurses, home health aides, therapists, medical social workers, and other home health care professionals who serve their communities in 24 states and India from more than 240 offices. For more information, visit [www.bayada.com](http://www.bayada.com).*

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