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Contact: Stephen Hanse, 518-312-9777

## **New York State Health Facilities Association Statement on Today's Department of Health Press Conference**

Albany, New York — Stephen Hanse, President and CEO of the New York State Health Facilities Association and the New York State Center for Assisted Living (NYSHFA/NYSCAL), a state wide association representing over 450 nursing homes and assisted living facilities issued the following statement in response to today's Department of Health press conference regarding the impacts of the Department's March 25<sup>th</sup> Advisory.

"During today's press conference the statement that 'facts matter' was continuously repeated. Regarding long-term care and COVID-19 the facts are clear – due to their advanced age and struggles with multiple chronic diseases, nursing home and assisted living residents are the most vulnerable population and the least able to withstand the insidious COVID-19 virus."

"At the onset of the COVID-19 virus, nursing homes and assisted living facilities were not the top priority. The principal focus of policymakers was on bolstering hospital resources and ramping up hospital bed capacity. This strategy included the Department of Health's March 25<sup>th</sup> Advisory.

"As we learn more about the COVID-19 virus every day, policymakers now know that the men and women residing in nursing homes and assisted living facilities are the most at risk to infection from the COVID-19 virus. Consequently, it is essential that nursing homes and assisted living providers receive the full support and assistance from elected officials and policymakers to ensure they have the necessary resources to defeat this virus and safeguard their residents and staff.

"For too long, nursing homes and assisted living provider have been subjected to significant Medicaid cuts. These cuts must stop. Policymakers must renew their commitment to fully support and fund nursing home and assisted living care for the most vulnerable in our communities."

"As Commissioner Zucker stated today, outbreaks of COVID-19 in nursing homes were not the result of inadequate quality in nursing homes. As such, we are all in this together – providers, policymakers and the public. Together, each of our individual actions must be directed at safeguarding our most vulnerable and lead us to collectively overcome our present circumstances and create a stronger and safer future."

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