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## **New York State Health Facilities Association Statement on DOH Allowing Visitation in Nursing Homes**

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 statewide association representing over 450 nursing homes and assisted living facilities issued the following statement in response to today's Department of Health announcement allowing visitation in nursing homes.

"We applaud Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker for opening up nursing homes to visitation throughout New York. It has been since early March of this year that our residents have been unable to receive visitors in person as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. While our residents have become skilled at using various digital communication platforms to connect with their loved ones, digital interaction doesn't compare to the joy of in-person interaction.

"Nursing homes throughout New York have made incredible strides in eradicating COVID-19 from their facilities and today's visitation policy recognizes the success of their enormous efforts in battling this virus. The policies announced today by the Department of Health are thoughtful and truly safeguard residents, staff and visitors while allowing in-person resident visitation.

"Among other things, the Department of Health guidelines require a nursing home be free of COVID-19 for 28 days; two visitors per resident may visit at one time, and visitors must have their temperature taken prior to entry and utilize a face mask and socially distance themselves while in the nursing home. Additionally, no more than 10 percent of the residents of a nursing home may receive visitors at any one time. As such, a nursing home must develop a facility specific visitation plan and provide it to the Department of Health.

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