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Contact: Stephen Hanse, 518-312-9777

NYS Health Facilities Association Statement on Recent Nursing Home Legislative Proposals

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 organization representing over 425 skilled nursing and assisted living providers issued the following statement in response to recent legislative proposals advanced by the Governor and certain members of the Legislature.

“These special interest proposals only serve to deflect responsibility from New York’s flawed ‘hospital centric’ approach to combatting the COVID-19 virus, the State’s historic funding cuts to long-term care and New York’s significant shortage in long-term care workers.”

“For over 12 years, New York has cut Medicaid funding to nursing homes resulting in almost \$2 billion in cuts. Almost 80 percent of nursing home resident care is paid for by Medicaid. The average cost for providing a nursing home resident with 24-hour care is \$266, however, New York only reimburses providers an average of \$211. This \$55 shortfall, which is the largest shortfall of any state in the Nation, equates to New York paying only \$8.79 per hour to care for our most vulnerable. Most folks pay their babysitter more than \$8.79 per hour!

“Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, NYSHFA was working with Commissioner Zucker and the Department of Health to address the State’s long-term care workforce crisis. The State’s workforce shortage is well documented in the August 2020 Department of Health study conducted by Cornell University as well as in the SUNY School of Public Health Center for Workforce Studies report. Nevertheless, New York has failed to implement efforts to truly address this crisis and recruit and retain women and men into fulfilling careers in long-term care.”

“The COVID-19 virus first appeared in the United States at a nursing home in Washington State with devastating consequences. New York disregarded this fact and focused the State’s limited resources on hospital-based solutions such as the Javits Center and the USS Comfort that ultimately proved to be ill-advised and rash while nursing homes throughout New York were left scrambling to safeguard their residents and staff.

“Instead of acknowledging the State’s flawed ‘hospital centric’ approach and addressing the systemic nursing home funding and workforce issues, these legislative proposals only serve to deflect responsibility from the State onto long term care providers.”

“Policymakers and legislators must stop their blame game and implement genuine reform measures that do not deflect from the real issues affecting nursing homes – namely the State’s continual cutting of Medicaid and its workforce shortage crisis. Addressing these two issues will truly benefit the men and women receiving essential care in New York’s nursing homes.”

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