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NYS Health Facilities Association Statement on ‘Nursing Home Reform’ Bills

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 various ‘nursing home reform’ bills in the Legislature.

“There have been many bills introduced in the State Legislature under the guise of ‘nursing home reform.’ Whether it’s the requiring 70 percent of revenues be allocated to direct care or implementing studies or increasing fines, not one of these bills truly improves quality outcomes or addresses the two most important issues facing nursing homes in our State, namely New York’s long-term care workforce staffing crisis and the State’s 12+ years of slashing over \$2 billion in Medicaid funding to nursing homes.”

“Nursing homes throughout New York went into the pandemic struggling to recruit and retain workers. Then providers lost more staff due to illness and workers staying home to care for their children when schools were closed.”

“Legislators and policymakers are well aware of New York’s long-term care workforce crisis. Nursing home advocates have been raising the crisis for years with both the Legislature and the Department of Health. The workforce shortages are well documented in the SUNY Center for Health Workforce Studies 2020 Report and the Department of Health August 2020 minimum staffing report prepared by Cornell University. However, there is not a single bill introduced in the Legislature or in the Budget that would meaningfully address the long-term care workforce crisis.”

“On top of New York’s nursing home workforce shortages, the State continues to underfund nursing home care and even cut almost \$100 million in Medicaid funding to nursing homes in the middle of the pandemic!”

“Almost 80 percent of New York’s nursing home resident care is reimbursed by Medicaid. The average cost of providing 24-hour nursing home care in New York is \$266 per resident per day, but the State only pays an average of \$211 per resident per day – or \$8.79 per hour! This \$55 Medicaid shortfall is the largest in the Nation and directly impacts a nursing home’s ability to retain workers when hospitals can always pay nurses more.”

“If legislators and policymakers are truly sincere about ‘nursing home reform’ they will implement measures to meaningfully recruit and retain workers into long-term care and increase Medicaid reimbursement to nursing homes. Failing to address these two issues is a failure by the State to implement true and meaningful nursing home reform.”

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