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NYS Health Facilities Association Statement on Long Term Care Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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) issued the following statement in response to rising number of COVID-19 outbreaks and fatalities in New York's nursing homes and assisted living communities and the staff caring for residents:

"It's been said that you make a living by what you make but you make a life by what you give. As New York continues to battle the COVID-19 virus, there are no other individuals that embody this sentiment more than the men and women giving their utmost all to provide care for residents in New York's nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

"The men and women working in our nursing homes and assisted living facilities do what they do because they have a passion for providing care and love to the most vulnerable in our society – and as such - they are worthy of all our honor, respect and admiration.

As Governor Cuomo noted today in referring to essential workers 'killing themselves to make lives easier for others,' nursing home and assisted living staff throughout the State are doing just that and have unfortunately witnessed first-hand both the infection and passing of their beloved residents and fellow staff as they provide direct care on the front lines of the COVID-19 battle.

"I have received numerous heartbreaking telephone calls and e-mails from New York's frontline caregivers in nursing homes and assisted living facilities expressing their exasperation of how our profession is often unfairly portrayed because of the havoc being inflicted upon our residents by the insidious COVID-19 virus.

"Outbreaks of COVID-19 are not the result of inattentiveness or shortcomings in our facilities. The very nature of long-term care is a high touch environment where social distancing is not an option in providing care. Staff are hands-on helping residents with bathing, dressing, eating and other personal daily needs.

"As New Yorkers, we are all experiencing overwhelming adversity right now. However, there are no other men and women who are more resilient, caring and loving than the men and women who work in our skilled nursing and assisted living facilities. We are all in this together, and together, each of our individual actions will lead us to collectively overcome our present circumstances and create a stronger, flourishing future.

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