

For Immediate Release

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STATEMENT FROM THE HOME CARE ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC.

Regarding Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's Press Release on Home Care Providers

The Home Care Association of New York State and our members fully support efforts to ensure that our agencies are able to recruit properly trained and certified home care aides, which has been the original and primary focus of the Attorney General's two-year inquiry involving a limited number of training sites in the downstate area. Aides trained at these sites were then employed by agencies throughout the region, which as a consequence were then affected through the subpoena process by this investigation.

Home care agencies need reassurance that the New York State Department of Health is adequately monitoring these training programs and ensuring the integrity of the certification process. Our home health care providers and the homebound patients they serve count on receiving the highest quality care provided by the best trained staff.

We obviously support meaningful initiatives to identify and prevent fraudulent activity. But we are very concerned that last year's budget deal put incredible pressure on the State to recover over \$1.6 billion in Medicaid dollars over five years under the auspices of "fraud" in order to receive \$1.5 billion in Federal (F-SHRP) funding. Given this pressure, we are concerned that non-fraudulent activities such as billing and coding mistakes will be mischaracterized as fraud.

The vast majority of our hardworking home health care providers and their caregivers are delivering invaluable quality home-based health care to more than 400,000 New Yorkers annually. We believe that those mission-driven providers have been unfairly labeled through overzealous hyperbole. In fact, the Spitzer Administration supports home health care as a way to provide patient-centered and more efficient health care services where people prefer them – at home.

Finally, Attorney General Cuomo said that "the investigation is aimed at separating the legitimate home health care operators from the fraudulent ones." We completely agree and hope the Attorney General's efforts will ferret out the true fraud without jeopardizing patient care.