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For Immediate Release: December 2, 2009

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## A Statement by HCA President Joanne Cunningham on Legislature's Passage of a Deficit-Reduction Plan

"The Senate and Assembly have passed a deficit-reduction bill that scales back many of the Governor's proposed home care cuts. Nevertheless, the home care community remains concerned about the future sustainability of services under the Governor's claim that more cuts are still needed."

"As it is, past funding reductions have left an alarming two-thirds of New York home care agencies operating in the red, according to a recent analysis by HCA and our partners at the New York Association of Homes & Services for the Aging (NYAHSA). Further cuts enacted under this week's deficit-reduction bill – though smaller than what was proposed in the Governor's original plan – will impact services that help patients stay out of the hospital, manage a chronic health condition at home, and avoid nursing home admission."

"Recognizing the severity of New York's fiscal situation, the home care community has strived to advance positive solutions for addressing the state's deficit in ways that link today's urgent fiscal demands with sound, long-term health care policy decisions. This is why HCA developed constructive proposals of our own to make the Medicaid system more efficient through our comprehensive Home Care Accessibility and Efficiency Improvement Act (HCA-EIA), continuing in a long tradition of proactive advocacy on behalf of the home care community."

"Throughout the past several months, HCA has engaged the Legislature and Governor Paterson's administration about the cost-saving features of HCA-EIA. As a result of these efforts, state leaders ultimately included one of our HCA-EIA provisions in this week's deficit-reduction bill, resulting in millions of dollars in Medicaid savings by increasing the flexibility for nurses who prepare medication pre-fills for home care patients."

"Though cuts to home care unfortunately remained in the final deficit-reduction bill, HCA nevertheless appreciates the Legislature and Governor's support for productive cost-savings alternatives – like our pre-fill proposal – in place of additional reimbursement cuts that would have certainly caused much more damage. HCA pledges to continue working collaboratively in this spirit as the prospect of future deficit-reduction measures remains. In like fashion, we continue to strongly urge that state leaders resist the lure of destructive across-the-board cuts, like those contained in the Governor's original deficit-reduction plan, when more productive approaches are available."

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