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A Statement by HCA President Joanne Cunningham On the Governor's Proposed Budget Cuts

State leaders are faced with the difficult task of reducing the growing state budget gap in an increasingly fragile economic climate. Rather than taking actions that will do irreparable damage to the home health care system, and harm the patients and families that depend on it, state leaders should make investments to further utilize home care as a solution to our state's health care and fiscal challenges

As a proven, cost-effective alternative to care provided in the institutional setting, home care fulfills a critical role, especially during this time of unparalleled fiscal hardship, when a secure home care system is essential not only in meeting the state's responsibility to vulnerable patients but also in targeting Medicaid resources most efficiently.

In testimony HCA will be presenting to the Assembly Ways and Means Committee on Thursday, we recommend several measures for affirmatively applying home care in ways that support a more efficient Medicaid system.

HCA's ideas are rooted in the unique strengths of home care delivery rather than through across-the-board draconian funding cuts. Our ideas include:

- Stronger interventions to ensure that patients do not enter a nursing home facility prematurely – and at greater cost to Medicaid;
- Wider use of home-based disease-management technology to reduce a patient's chances of hospitalization, rehospitalization, or other high-cost service use. The financial benefit of home care technology investment was most recently supported by economist Robert Litan who published a study in October which found that widespread use of remote patient monitoring systems could cut the nation's health care costs by \$197 billion over the next 25 years, especially for treatment of chronic diseases like diabetes and congestive heart failure;
- Revised patient assessment tools to assure that patients are receiving the right care in the right setting, assuring the best quality outcomes and cost-effectiveness; and

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- Expanded access to New York’s Long Term Home Health Care Program (LTHHCP) – also known as the “Nursing Home Without Walls” – which provides long-term in-home health care services to approximately 30,000 patients at 50 percent the cost of nursing home care.

New York’s health care system was already targeted for severe cuts. Further cuts mean that home care agencies will yet again have to scale back services, cut staff, reduce their caseloads, or, worse yet, close their doors – all at a time when the need for home care investment is vital and a solution to our current crisis.

Considered to be a less-costly alternative to care provided in the nursing home or hospital setting, home care encompasses a broad spectrum of health, therapeutic and social services delivered at home to persons with disabilities as well as patients who are chronically ill or recovering from an illness. Home care patients include newborns requiring maternal-infant care services, children in need of therapy services, elderly patients whose chronic medical condition requires skilled nursing care or home health aide assistance, technology-dependent patients who depend on life-sustaining home medical equipment, and many others.