

Memorandum of Support

on Senate Health Agenda May 15, 2024



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*HCA, New York State's
home care association,
represents hundreds of
providers and
thousands of staff who
collectively provide
health care to hundreds
of thousands of New
Yorkers.*

*HCA members include
Certified Home Health
Agencies, Licensed
Home Care Services
Agencies, Long Term
Home Health Care
Programs, Hospices,
Managed Long Term
Care/PACE Plans,
Consumer Directed
Personal Assisted
Programs, waiver
programs, allied health
and health support
organizations.*

*"Helping New
Yorkers **Feel Right**
at Home"*

To: Members of the New York State Legislature

Re: S.2931- B Senator Rivera / A.4583-A Assemblywoman

Paulin *An Act to amend the public health law and the social services law, in relation to enacting the New York home care first act*

Date: May 2024

The Home Care Association of New York State (HCA) **strongly supports** S.2931 Senator Rivera / A.4583-A Assemblywoman Paulin, *The New York Home Care First Act* (HCF). HCF provides for and coordinates vital policy and program support for home care in its core role in the health care continuum. Home care agencies, workers, patients and health plans need this critical action.

HCF updates and strengthens Article 36 of the Public Health Law and related statutes that provide for the state's home care policy. Among its provisions it:

- Reinforces Article 36's and the state's core policy and program focus on home care as an alternative to institutionalization, and its accessibility as a public policy priority.
- Provides explicit statute ensuring that all individuals, when medically appropriate and before referral for institutionalization, first be presented the option to be assessed and considered for care at home.
- Requires that state rate setting ensure adequate financial and programmatic support for accessible, high level home care in accordance with HCF goals.
- Provides an additional state rate mechanism to support recruitment, training, compensation and retention of the home care workforce, including aides, nurses, and therapists, further target shortage areas and disciplines, and critical supports.
- Ensures home care is considered and appropriately included in the state's strategic primary, preventive and public health initiatives and policies (addressing home care's constant omission from such relevant policies, supports and roles).
- Ensures consideration and inclusion in state programs that provide capital, infrastructure and workforce development support and funding (where home care is also often overlooked).
- Updates home care's participation in telehealth, since the 2007 home telehealth program.
- Provides for information and guidance to assist patient referral for home care by hospitals, nursing homes, physicians, and other applicable settings, including in the discharge planning process.
- Provide for a comprehensive public education program about home care.

As witnessed in and compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need and benefits of care delivery at home have never been clearer nor greater than they are today, and into the future. After decades of increasing state-disconnect and loss of cohesion of core policies, there is a more-than-ever need for responsible and urgent state support of the patients, services, workers and home care role throughout NY's health care system.