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A Statement by HCA President Joanne Cunningham on Governor Cuomo's Budget

Today Governor Cuomo released a budget containing billions in unprecedented Medicaid reductions, cutting at the heart of New York's health care system.

While providing no details as to how exactly these destructive cuts would be spread across the health delivery system, the Governor's budget speech did, however, single out home care using misinformation and politically-motivated rhetoric, again neglecting crucial facts.

For instance, Governor Cuomo's speech never mentioned that New York's home care system already saves millions of Medicaid dollars by preventing higher-cost services, such as hospital and nursing home care, for hundreds of thousands of patients whose health care needs can be managed in the home setting.

The Governor also failed to note one of the driving reasons for administrative expense: the heap of unfunded mandates, regulations, and other costly obligations that his and past administrations continue to shove at the home care community – to the tune of \$75 million annually.

Nor did he mention that prior-year state budget cuts and millions of dollars in unfunded mandates have left 70 percent of home care providers operating in the red, according to official, independently-certified financial documents which directly refute the Governor's own rhetoric about home care expenses.

This budget proposes Medicaid cuts of \$5.9 billion annually. If that toll is applied uniformly, then New York's home care system can expect to get slammed with more than half-a-billion dollars in job-destroying cuts, leaving vulnerable New Yorkers without vital services that help keep them out of the hospital or nursing home.

Unfortunately, like the Governor's rhetoric about home care, this budget provides no details. Instead, the Governor punts important decisions, affecting vital care for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable New Yorkers, to a Medicaid Redesign commission that is asked to pick the poison and decide how cuts are doled out across the system, under the packaging of reform.

Many of the so-called reforms proposed to date would have disastrous consequences for already efficient parts of the health system, such as home care. HCA has advanced proposals of our own, from outside the Redesign process, to create efficiencies by building upon existing strengths within the system. We urge the Redesign Team, the Legislature and Governor's office to consider these productive alternatives in place of further destruction to New York's home care system.

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