



For Immediate Release:
February 6, 2018

Contact: Paul Larrabee
PLarrabee@corningplace.com
518.689.7246
518.491.7577 (Cell)

STATE BUDGET PRIORITIES REQUIRE ATTENTION FOR ELDERLY AND THE DISABLED

A coalition of advocates for the elderly and providers of long term care (LTC) and post-acute care (PAC) services joined forces at the state capital to underscore the importance of providing adequate and appropriate resources for New York State's rapidly growing senior population that today tops 1.2 million and by 2030 will increase by approximately 50 percent.

LeadingAge New York is among the members of a coalition that is seeking to stem proposed cuts in services and supports for seniors of more than \$407 million.

"State and Federal funding programs are shortchanging the LTC sector. We need to support our seniors by providing adequate investment in the services they require," said Ami Schnauber, Vice President of Advocacy and Public Policy for LeadingAge New York. "Long term and post-acute care make up 30 percent of Medicaid global spending, yet the sector has received only a small fraction of state financial support for the critical infrastructure needed to survive in today's changing health care environment."

Anne Hill, Executive Director, Adult Day Health Care Council said, "We are here today representing medical model adult day health services, which are community-based providers of skilled services to New York's frail elderly and disabled populations. We are in Albany to ensure legislators know how critical transportation services are for this vulnerable population. ADHC providers offer and manage their own transportation, ensuring that participants are transported to the programs safely and on time, which is critical to their community caregivers who rely on these programs to maintain their loved ones in the community."

Carla Braveman, CEO and President of the Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State said, "Hospice utilization in New York State ranks 48th in the nation. Investment in hospice is a wise use of health care dollars. We are in Albany today to advocate for adequate funding for hospice services and ensure that individuals at the end of life have continued access to hospice care across the state."

Andrew Cruikshank, CEO, Fort Hudson Health System and Chairman of the LeadingAge NY Board said, "The post-acute and LTC sector have been on the short end of capital funding for infrastructure and information technology. Unfortunately, the proposed budget does not include sufficient funding to address the critical needs of the long term care sector. With a growing aging population, this is shortsighted and will undermine the stability of the entire long term care service sector. In the North Country, we are already experiencing significant service gaps, including a diminishing workforce and seniors who are often unable to access the hours of care that they need. We are in Albany to urge legislators to reverse the \$407 million in Medicaid cuts to long term care and dedicate \$150 million of Health Care Transformation Grant funding to the long term care sector."

Brian Nealon, CEO of The Wesley Community in Saratoga said, “As a provider of aging services for 700 seniors in Saratoga Springs, we continue to have grave concerns over the ongoing viability of caring for our frailest elders, most of whom reside in our skilled nursing facility. This concern is driven by the fact that 75% of our residents are covered by Medicaid and the Medicaid system has not provided increases for cost of living expenses or various mandates that have been required over the last many years. Realizing that the state is facing a \$4 billion deficit, and challenged to close that gap, the care of elders cannot continue to be a significant target for how that budget gap gets closed.”

Loren Ranaletta, CEO of Episcopal SeniorLife Communities in Rochester said, “The network of services for the elderly is very complex, with conflicting standards for admission and numerous coverage criteria. There appears to be no effort by the government to organize an integrated system for long term care, but rather continue its fragmented and siloed approach to funding programs and services. LTC has been a target for balancing deficits. We are in Albany today to ensure that the interests of the seniors that we care for are represented in budget negotiations.”

Michael Rosenblut, CEO of The Parker Jewish Institute in Queens, said “It is critically important that LeadingAge NY members advocate to protect the day to day needs of all the patients and clients that we serve. The Parker Jewish Institute provides both inpatient and outpatient services within the NYC metropolitan and Long Island area. We are both providers of care and insurers of care to the people in our community.”

Three priorities highlighted today to legislators include:

Directing more than \$150 million in transformation grants to Long Term Care providers to enhance and improve upon the existing infrastructure. And, the coalition is seeking to include specific protections in law to ensure that the funding is available to all LTPAC providers, including hospice programs.

Ensuring workforce recruitment and retention funds are distributed across all LTPAC sectors. Shortages in qualified staff have resulted in long waits for community-based services, increases in emergency room (ER) visits and hospitalizations, and reliance on overtime and staffing agencies. The growing population of seniors requires additional funding to meet the growing demand for a LTPAC workforce.

Restore \$407 Million in Funding for LTPAC Providers. The proposed budget cuts funding to Managed Long Term Care plans by \$325 million and nursing homes by \$42.6 million. With our over 65 population growing exponentially and gaps in services already evident across the state, this disinvestment in long term care services and supports will only exacerbate the problem.

#