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LeadingAge New York Calls on Legislature to Maintain Support for Aging New Yorkers and Invest in Workforce Development

Requests \$50 Million for Workforce Investment and Restoration of Funds to Protect Well-Being of New York's Seniors

A coalition of advocates for the elderly and providers of long-term/post-acute care (LTPAC) services traveled to Albany on Tuesday, February 5 to ask legislators and state officials to continue supporting the well-being of the seniors they serve. New York's population aged 65 and older is projected to grow 50 percent by 2040, while the working age population is declining. Hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts proposed in the Governor's 2019-20 Executive Budget will exacerbate the long-term care workforce shortage, while threatening access to long-term care services for frail elderly New Yorkers.

Advocates are requesting that the Legislature:

- **Restore \$500 Million in Harmful Medicaid Cuts:** Funding cuts included in the Governor's Executive Budget would devastate long-term care providers and the services they offer to New York's aging population, while jeopardizing the well-being and quality of life of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.
- **Invest in Workforce Development:** A \$50 million investment would support the establishment of the Workforce Investment Now 4 Seniors (WIN4Seniors) initiative, which would focus on recruiting and retaining workers in nursing homes, home care, hospice, assisted living facilities, and other senior services. This program would provide benefits including enhanced wages, on-the-job training, and additional staff to support direct care positions.
- **Reduce Regulatory Barriers to Recruitment of Long-Term Care Workers:** In the context of workforce shortages, regulatory and statutory barriers to hiring and retaining long-term care workers must be eliminated. This would include improving access to and streamlining certificate training and renewal requirements for direct care workers and expediting background checks.

"Aging New Yorkers are the parents and grandparents who have helped build this state into the beacon that it is today. They have worked long and hard for us and deserve access to high-quality care as they age," **said Ami J. Schnauber, V.P. of Advocacy and Public Policy for LeadingAge New York.** "In order for the older adults in our communities to continue to receive quality services, we are requesting a \$50 million investment in our long-term care workforce to help recruit the staff needed to ensure a happy, healthy life for older New Yorkers."

LeadingAge New York, in collaboration with the Adult Day Health Care Council and the Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State, is requesting a restoration of Medicaid cuts and investments in advance care planning and palliative care. A detailed summation of the requests is available [here](#).

Anne Hill, Executive Director of the Adult Day Health Care Council, said, “We are 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, President and CEO 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 believe that when people are aware of what hospice and palliative care can truly provide, they are empowered to make health care choices that are right for them. We are advocating for a public education campaign focused on advance care planning, to help New Yorkers choose the care that’s best aligned with their values.”

Michael N. Rosenblut, President and CEO of Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation in Queens, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Managers of AgeWell New York, and Chairman of the LeadingAge New York Board of Directors said, “It is critically important that LeadingAge New York members advocate to protect the day-to-day needs of all the patients, residents, 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.”

Karen Zobel, CEO/Administrator of The Baptist Home at Brookmeade in Rhinebeck, said, “We’re proud to advocate for senior services on behalf of The Baptist Home at Brookmeade, and as an active member of LeadingAge New York. It’s vital that we ensure our elected officials are educated to make decisions that support the high-quality care we provide as caregivers, so that we can continue to do so.”

Founded in 1961, LeadingAge New York, formerly the New York Association of Homes & Services for the Aging (NYAHSAs), represents not-for-profit, mission-driven, and public continuing care providers, including nursing homes, senior housing, adult care facilities, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living, and community service providers. LeadingAge New York’s more than 600 members employ 150,000 professionals serving more than 500,000 New Yorkers annually. Learn more at www.leadingageny.org.

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