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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Bob Bellafiore, 518-928-8471, [bob@stanhope-ny.com](mailto:bob@stanhope-ny.com)  
Steven Greenberg, 518-469-9858, [steve@greenbergpr.com](mailto:steve@greenbergpr.com)

## **SENIOR HOUSING GAP LOOMING AS BOOMERS AGE, *LeadingAge New York* REPORT FINDS**

New York State faces a significant growing gap in the supply of safe and affordable senior housing as well as health care and other support services due to the steep growth in the number of senior citizens, as Baby Boomers get older, according to a report released today by LeadingAge New York, an association of non-profit senior care providers.

The report, "Senior Housing in New York State," details the growing need for good senior housing policy, stronger health care for seniors and the disproportionate impact that future trends will have on women. The analysis breaks out trends by region in a simple and easily understandable way.

"One in five New York State residents will be 65 or older within the next 30 years, while the 85-plus age group will grow by almost 50 percent," said LeadingAge New York President James W. Clyne, Jr. "Disability, cognitive impairment and chronic disease all increase with age. These seniors will need good places to live and quality health care at affordable prices. And this isn't an issue we can take care of at the last minute – New York needs to be planning for it now."

**Key findings include:**

- While Social Security lifts approximately 813,000 New York State seniors out of poverty each year, more than a quarter of New York seniors are near or below the federal poverty threshold (defined in 2012 as \$11,170 for single households and \$15,130 for two-person households).
- Women aged 65 and older face an even greater burden due to the fact that they are disproportionately poor. In 2008, 67% of New York State householders aged 65+ with income below the poverty level were widowed or non-married women. Oftentimes this is a result of lower wages, lower lifetime earnings and fewer years in the workforce.
- The most significant growth in the "oldest old" population – age 85-plus – will occur in the Westchester area (70%) followed by the Capital District and Long Island regions (57%), suggesting that demand for long term care services and supports in these regions will also increase dramatically.

- Nationwide and in New York State, nearly 30% of all non-institutionalized older adults in 2010 lived alone. This group represents a potentially vulnerable population since those living alone are more likely to get sick without anyone to care for them. Long Island has the lowest percentage (23.1%) while Buffalo has the highest (34.1%). Living alone is more common in older women than in older men (37.3% vs. 19.1%) and the proportion increases with advanced age.
- Senior housing providers in New York State have developed creative housing with services models that should be replicated and funded. These include: technology-enabled senior housing that allows older adults to participate in socialization activities; partnerships between housing providers and community organizations that enhance opportunities for seniors to engage in wellness activities; and co-location of managed long-term care providers and subsidized senior housing that allow chronically ill older adults to safely age-in-place.
- The report breaks out trends and other data by the following regions: Albany Capital District, NY Metro-Long Island, NY Metro-New York City, Western NY-Rochester, NY Metro-New Rochelle, and Central NY.

Clyne said that the critical conclusions in the report require state leaders to consider important policy implications. Among those conclusions:

1. There is already an unmet need in many areas of New York for subsidized senior housing with support services and upgraded building features, and important gaps in the availability of service coordination and support services.
2. Federal funding for new subsidized housing development is waning, and other funding programs leave gaps and add complexity.
3. Aging-in-place programs and partnerships can help to address shortages of subsidized senior housing, while the state's proposed investment in supportive housing is focused on costly Medicaid recipients, rather than on an aging-in-place model for seniors.
4. State assisted living regulations that define independent senior housing are unclear and confound the development of innovative housing with services models.
5. New York's Medicaid redesign initiatives will fundamentally change how services are delivered and paid for in New York, and that in turn will affect senior housing residents.
6. Federal regulations, funding and programs are promoting senior housing as a platform for delivering supportive and health care services.

7. Senior housing operators in New York State and around the country have developed creative housing with services models that should be studied and possibly replicated.

While Governor Cuomo has called for preserving and creating 14,000 new quality affordable housing units with an investment of \$1 billion, his proposal makes no mention of housing for seniors.

**About LeadingAge New York**

LeadingAge New York is the only statewide organization representing the entire continuum of not-for-profit, mission-driven and public continuing care, including senior housing, nursing home, adult care facility, continuing care retirement community, assisted living, home care, adult day health care and community services providers. LeadingAge New York's more than 600 members serve an estimated 500,000 New Yorkers of all ages annually. Long-term care has an estimated \$29 billion impact on New York's economy and nursing homes statewide support some 177,000 jobs.

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