



NEW YORK STATE SENATE

ALBANY, NY 12247

ALESSANDRA R. BIAGGI
SENATOR

April 24, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
New York State Governor
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Commissioner Howard A. Zucker
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza,
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker,

We want to extend our continued gratitude for your leadership throughout the COVID-19 crisis. We understand that securing and distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) to healthcare workers, essential workers, and others on the frontlines has been an ongoing priority and challenge for your offices during this crisis. While we are grateful for your continued attention to this issue, we are concerned that home healthcare workers are still not receiving the PPE they need to safely do their jobs.

We have heard from home healthcare providers who are working desperately to purchase or otherwise obtain PPE for their employees. Providers have had their orders delayed or diverted by government purchases, or have simply been unable to find and afford PPE. Many of these agencies have received little or no assistance from the state securing PPE for their workers. Home healthcare aides are understandably threatening to quit if they do not receive the protective equipment they need to safely do their jobs.

New York City recently began distributing PPE to home care agencies. While this is an important step, home health care agencies would benefit from state-wide coordination. The New York State Department of Health should help New York City and other municipalities distribute PPE to home care agencies based on the highest need, and ensure that agencies around the state, not just in New York City, receive the PPE their workers need.

Home healthcare workers provide services to some of the most vulnerable members of our society everyday. They help older New Yorkers and New Yorkers with disabilities bathe, dress, take their medicine, keep their homes clean, and eat, all while providing companionship and emotional support. These intimate tasks put both home healthcare workers and their clients at risk of transmitting COVID-19. Without proper protective equipment, healthcare workers put their clients and themselves in danger. Moreover, the New Yorkers who rely on the support of home healthcare workers to complete daily tasks are likely to face a higher risk if they

contract COVID-19. Some are even forgoing care from home health aides out of fear of becoming ill with coronavirus. We should take every precaution to ensure their safety, just as we must protect residents in nursing homes.

The vast majority of home healthcare workers are women, more than half are people of color. Many work for low-wages — nationally, more than half of home healthcare workers rely on some form of public assistance according to PHI. These workers continue to show up each day to help the many New Yorkers who rely on their services despite the risks and low pay. The least we can do is ensure they have access to PPE.

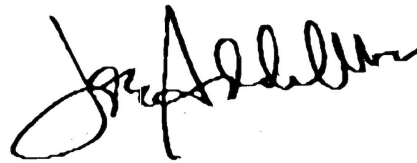
We urge you to work with home healthcare providers around the state to ensure they are immediately supplied with adequate PPE for their employees.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Alessandra Biaggi
New York State Senator, District 34



Joe Addabbo
New York State Senator, District 15



Jamaal T. Bailey
New York State Senator, District 36



Andrew Gounardes
New York State Senator, District 22



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New York State Senator, District 27



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New York State Senator, District 28



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New York State Senator, District 11



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New York State Senate, District 3



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New York State Senator, District 10



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New York State Senator, District 6