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THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



**DAVID CARLUCCI**  
SENATOR, 38TH DISTRICT

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April 29, 2020

Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS)  
One Empire Drive  
Rensselaer, NY 12144

Greater New York Hospitals Association (GNYHA)  
555 West 57th Street  
15th Floor  
New York, NY 10019

Dear New York Hospital CEOs and Chief Administrators,

We commend our hospitals for the work they have been doing on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. You have demonstrated great commitment and leadership and shown the nation New York's strength. One of the greatest tragedies of the COVID-19 pandemic has been patients' isolation during their hospitalization.

We propose that your hospitals create new Compassionate Helper Volunteer Programs to connect families with their loved ones while they are hospitalized. These programs will identify individuals who can aid in non-medical, quality-of-life activities to ease a patient's and their family's fear due to separation. These volunteers can also assist in strengthening cultural competency and overcoming language barriers between the patient and staff. The presence of these individuals would provide some much-needed relief to our overwhelmed hospital staff.

Of course, it would be essential to minimize the likelihood that Compassionate Helpers would become infected with COVID-19. Compassionate Helpers would require personal protection equipment and training, and would follow any volunteer protocols already in place, for example, receiving the tuberculosis vaccine or other typical measures that are taken to maintain patient, staff, and volunteer health and safety. To the extent medical science develops the ability to detect immunity from COVID-19, for example through antibody testing, the program could prioritize those with immunity in accepting volunteers. We would encourage the State and City health departments to work with you to develop standards for selection, training, and deploying Compassionate Helpers in your institutions. A Compassionate Helper might be a family member of someone who is currently hospitalized as long as they meet the selection criteria and have been appropriately trained.

Compassionate Helpers can ease a small portion of the demands placed on health care workers by comforting patients in overly taxed healthcare facilities. Compassionate Helpers can assist the patient with cell phone or

iPad contact with families or friends so there is direct interaction during times of greatest need. If a patient is not able to communicate, the Helper will inform the families on non-medical, but quality of life matters.

The hospitals will have control over who is accepted as a Compassionate Helper, and has control to terminate any individual who is not working in the best interest of the patient and the families involved. We believe that such program will give peace of mind to patients and their families, as well as help lessen the strain on our frontline healthcare workers.

Sincerely,

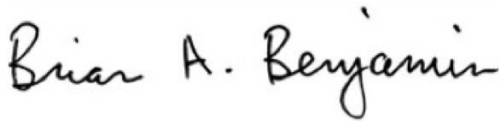


Senator David Carlucci  
38<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator Brian Kavanagh  
26<sup>th</sup> Senate District

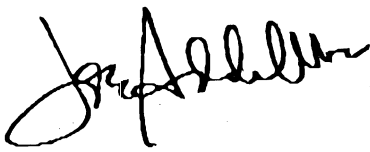
CC: Howard Zucker, M.D., J.D., Commissioner, NYS Department of Health  
Oxiris Barbot, M.D., Commissioner, NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene



Senator Brian A. Benjamin  
30<sup>th</sup> Senate District



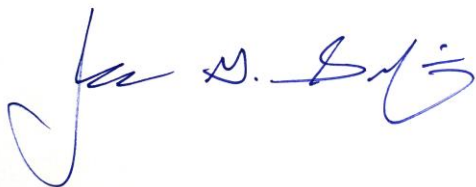
Senator Todd Kaminsky  
9<sup>th</sup> Senate District



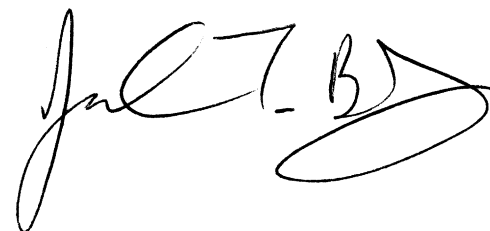
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Senator James Sanders Jr.  
10<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Senator Velmanette Montgomery  
25<sup>th</sup> Senate District



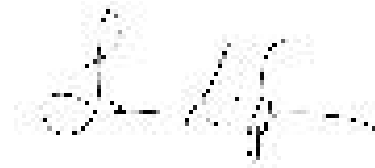
Senator Jessica Ramos  
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