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January 14, 2021

Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Home Care Emergency Financial Relief

Dear Governor Hochul:

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt our state and our health care system in particular, hospitals have been approaching capacity while also struggling to maintain sufficient staffing. Home and community-based services (HCBS) serve a critical role of helping individuals to remain in their homes and communities while receiving the care they need outside of hospitals and long term care facilities—which is all the more critical during the current pandemic. However, even as this industry has become more critical during the pandemic, it is currently facing an urgent crisis that requires immediate assistance from the State. In an effort to help this industry continue to alleviate the overcrowding of hospitals, while ensuring New Yorkers can safely receive the care they need in their homes and communities, **I urge you to utilize the State's budget surplus to invest in home and community-based services to provide immediate financial relief to this sector.**

The New York State Association of Health Care Providers, which represents home and community-based care agencies and organizations, recently surveyed their members to gain insight into the current crisis the industry is facing. According to their survey, nearly half of respondents are facing more than 10% staff call-outs as a result of COVID-19 precautions, and just less than 90% have reported difficulty serving existing clients. Further, more than 10% stated that their financial losses are so significant that they are considering closing. These stark statistics would be severely troubling in the best of times, but now especially it is essential that the State ensures home and community-based care agencies are able to provide these necessary services.

I commend you for recognizing the need for our State to invest in the healthcare workforce in your 2022 State of the State book. I have long been supportive of initiatives to bolster our home care workforce through recruitment and training efforts, and your inclusion of such efforts in your State of the State is a step forward in this area that I hope will remain in the State's final enacted budget later this year. However, we cannot

afford to wait for the budget process to unfold when we are facing this crisis now, which is why **it is essential to immediately provide financial relief to help home care agencies and organizations cover the costs of salaries, overtime, sick leave, and hiring bonuses for home care aides to ensure they can continue to operate and provide the necessary services upon which so many New Yorkers rely.**

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter, and I look forward to working with you on this urgent request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Serino".

Senator Sue Serino

41st District