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Statement From HCA President Joanne Cunningham on Governor Spitzer's State of the State Address

Home Care Association of New York State (HCA) President Joanne Cunningham today said she was encouraged by the health care features of Governor Spitzer's State of the State message, specifically its focus on "the right care at the right price in the right medical setting."

However, Cunningham said, "More specifics are needed on the Governor's plans for Medicaid before HCA can fully assess the impacts of his proposals on home care providers and patients, and the health care system overall."

"The Governor's mantra of 'the right care at the right price in the right medical setting' captures the essence of home care, where patients receive appropriate care in a favorable and cost-effective environment," Cunningham said. "While he made no direct mention of it, I am confident that the Governor continues to recognize the need for strategic investment in home and community based health care, as expressed in his address last year."

She noted that this year's State of the State address referenced a need for further investment in health care technology, specifically electronic medical recordkeeping, which is an important tool for effectively managing patient care.

"HCA applauds the Governor's focus on health care technology and we continue to seek investment in innovative technologies like telehealth, where providers monitor patients from remote settings, increasing the likelihood of spotting health concerns outside of regularly scheduled home health visits."

Cunningham said HCA also awaits further details on the Governor's proposal to refashion the health care reimbursement structure, with an emphasis on preventive care, as well as his proposed \$400 million Housing Opportunity Fund that, Governor Spitzer said, "enables the disabled and others with special needs to live independently."

"New York's health care system is in fragile condition. The home health care industry, in particular, faces enormous pressure from many sides – from federal Medicare cutbacks, managed care plans, workforce shortages, regulatory burdens and rising utilities costs," Cunningham said. "As we await further details on the Governor's plans to address these issues, HCA presses forward with its advocacy efforts on behalf of our mission-driven home care providers and the patients and families they serve."

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*Committed to the principles of high-quality and cost-effective community based health care, the **Home Care Association of New York State** (HCA) assists its members on state and federal legislation, regulations and reimbursement issues pertinent to the home health field. As the premier home health care association in New York State, HCA represents more than 500 providers, individuals and associate members who collectively provide service and support to thousands of New Yorkers.*