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A Statement from HCA President Joanne Cunningham in Recognition of National Nurses Week

“In recognition of National Nurses Week (celebrated annually on May 6 to May 12) the Home Care Association of New York State honors the great compassion, wisdom, skill and dedication of professional nurses who form the core of our home care system and the health care system generally.

“Through the historic work of Lillian Wald – who pioneered home care public health nursing in New York’s Lower East Side during the late 19th century – to the extraordinary efforts of today’s visiting nurse professionals, millions of our state and nation’s sickest and most vulnerable patients have received needed care at home with dignity and solace, having spent less time in health facilities, and having recuperated quicker from illness or injury.

“The home care nurse merits special tribute. An extraordinary level of skill and undaunted independence is needed to care for patients outside the controlled environment of health facilities, without immediate backup support from peers, and with only the tools one carries to the home visit. The home environment is often a place in flux, where the complexities of family life and the patient’s physical surroundings interact in ways that the home care nurse must anticipate and factor into any clinical assessment.

“Much like yesterday’s nursing pioneers, today’s home care nurse remains on the cutting-edge of public health efforts. Home care nurses, for instance, have played an instrumental role in employing new disease-management technologies, such as home telehealth, that help improve patient health outcomes through remote monitoring as a supplement to routine home visits.

“As these dedicated nursing professionals continue the proud traditions of the past, while helping to transform the future of nursing through innovative practices and clinical methods, we salute their extraordinary commitment on behalf of the patients they serve.”

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Considered to be a less-costly alternative to care provided in the nursing home or hospital setting, home care encompasses a broad spectrum of health, therapeutic and social services delivered at home to persons with disabilities as well as patients who are chronically ill or recovering from an illness. Home care patients include newborns requiring maternal-infant care services, children in need of therapy services, elderly patients whose chronic medical condition requires skilled nursing care or home health aide assistance, technology-dependent patients who depend on life-sustaining home medical equipment, and many others.