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A Statement by HCA President Joanne Cunningham in Response to Governor Paterson's Proposed Home Care Cuts

Governor Paterson's proposed cuts to home care – which gouges already inadequate funding levels by 10 percent more – will not only destroy services that millions of New Yorkers rely upon, but such cuts are also wholly unnecessary.

There is no denying the state faces difficult and enormous fiscal challenges. Yet the home care cuts announced today in the Governor's deficit reduction plan neglect to recognize that New York's home care community has been a proactive and constructive partner in developing solutions that meet these very challenges head on.

This year the Home Care Association of New York State presented lawmakers and Governor Paterson's administration with a comprehensive 33-part bill, "the Home Care Accessibility and Efficiency Improvement Act" (HCA-EIA), which contains productive ideas for saving Medicaid dollars by instituting home care program enhancements, regulatory reforms, workforce flexibility measures, quality and performance standards, and a realignment of financial incentives.

These sensible, strategic and affirmative proposals recognize that home care is already the solution to Medicaid efficiency because it can dramatically reduce a patient's chances of becoming hospitalized or needing to enter a nursing home prematurely.

Unfortunately, rather than embrace constructive proposals for reform and cost-reduction, the Paterson administration has again resorted to an across-the-board, meat-cleaver approach which is bad for New York's health care system, the patients it serves, the economy, and prior advancements already achieved in the realignment of our long term care system towards cost-effective, patient-centered home and community-based models of care.

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