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Statement by HCA President Joanne Cunningham on Spitzer's Continued Assault on Home Health Care

Home Care Association of New York State (HCA) President Joanne Cunningham today called the Governor's 21-day Executive Budget amendments "a further assault on home health care and the vast majority of New Yorkers who depend on it and support greater access to home health care, not less."

"As if the Governor's original cuts didn't pack enough of a blow to home health care, this second swipe undermines efforts, including the Governor's own, to shift the focus from institutional to community-based care," Cunningham said.

Home health care had already been dealt \$100 million in debilitating cuts from the Governor's original 2008-09 Executive Budget proposal. Today's Budget amendments, however, add another \$8 million in cuts that will further saddle New York's mission-driven home health care providers who already struggle to serve a patient population with complex medical needs – many through Medicare and Medicaid – and skyrocketing infrastructure costs.

In a January 29 letter to Governor Spitzer, Cunningham called for the Governor's retraction of \$20 million in cuts to the Medicaid trend factor, among other changes to his Budget proposal during the 21-day amendment period. Since Medicaid reimbursements are based on two-year-old cost data, the trend factor, a rate adjustment accounting for inflation, is vital for home health care providers serving a large proportion of high-need Medicaid patients.

Rather than withdraw his cuts, Cunningham said, today's Budget amendments propose further reductions, bringing the total home health care cuts to over \$108 million. At the same time, a HANYS/Siena Research Institute poll recently found that **76 percent of New Yorkers want increased funding for home health care, 18 percent support keeping funding at current levels, while only 3 percent support decreased funding, as the Governor has proposed.**

"Clearly these cuts run counter to the Governor's position less than a year ago and the overwhelming position of New Yorkers today," Cunningham said.

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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 400 home health care providers, individuals and associate members who collectively provide service and support to thousands of New Yorkers.*