



February 10, 2021

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Majority Leader, New York State Senate
Honorable Carl Heastie, Speaker, New York State Assembly
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Heastie,

We know that you, and all New Yorkers, mourn the devastating loss of life in our state's nursing homes during this pandemic and are very concerned about the ongoing challenges nursing home residents and their families face. The experience of this past year has also exposed serious, underlying quality problems in the industry.

The recent [report](#) released by Attorney General Letitia James on nursing homes' response to the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the way in which these deficiencies, including in hours of care, worsened the pandemic's impact on residents and staff.

We join together on behalf of over 2 million New Yorkers, including nursing home residents, their family members and nursing home staff, to request that you prioritize nursing home reform in this year's budget process. Our neighboring states of New Jersey and Massachusetts have already passed and begun to implement such reform.

To be effective in improving quality of care, a reform package must ensure nursing homes provide sufficient hours of care to residents. Our state [ranks 29th](#) nationally in the number of total care hours residents receive per day, according to the Long Term Care Community Coalition.

The package must also require facilities to spend a significant portion of their revenue on resident care and address the way some owners divert taxpayer dollars toward excessive profits through complicated financial arrangements between multiple corporations. Coupled with this, it should increase transparency regarding ownership transactions and prevent poor-performing owners from purchasing more facilities.

Any reform package must improve infection control enforcement and ensure that families are able to effectively advocate for their loved ones in nursing homes and visit them safely. Until in-person, indoor visitation fully resumes facilities must make available and facilitate regular opportunities for virtual, outdoor (when feasible and safe) and compassionate care visitation.

Taken together, these reforms would improve the quality of care for our state's vulnerable nursing home residents. They would also help ensure that facilities are much better prepared for another emergency like the current pandemic.

We are grateful for the actions you have already taken to address this issue and look forward to working with all of you to advance legislation through the budget to address this crisis. We owe nothing less to those we have lost this year.

Sincerely,



Beth Finkel
State Director
AARP New York



Richard Mollot
Executive Director
Long Term Care Community Coalition



Milly Silva
Executive Vice President
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