



March 23, 2021

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Room 907 LOB
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins:

On behalf of Argentum NY, Empire State Association of Assisted Living (ESAAL), LeadingAge NY, and NYSCAL, representing New York State's adult care facilities (ACFs) and assisted living residences (ALRs) and Assisted Living Programs (ALPs) and the residents and families they serve, we share your commitment to ensure the health and well-being of New York's seniors.

We are writing today to request your leadership and support as Senate Majority Leader in allocating essential funding to these front-line providers of care and services for those most vulnerable to COVID-19. Specifically, we are asking the Legislature to allocate \$75 million to adult care facilities, assisted living residences, and assisted living programs in the FY 2021-22 State budget to help these facilities recover from severe financial hardships incurred as they worked to keep residents and employees safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This pandemic has prompted an unprecedented public health emergency and presented our providers and their dedicated staff with innumerable challenges as they work around the clock to provide high quality care, supports, and services to their residents while protecting them from COVID-19. With an average age of 85 and multiple chronic health conditions, our residents are among those most at risk of contracting and suffering from the devastating consequences of COVID-19. Further, residents require close contact to provide necessary assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing, eating, toileting, as well as personal and health care services.

In rising to meet these challenges, senior living providers across New York have incurred approximately \$844 million in expenses to procure gowns, gloves, masks and other infection prevention and control supplies, to provide well deserved hero pay to staff, to hire additional staff, and to provide weekly testing for all staff as mandated by DOH. Another devastating consequence of the pandemic is the long-term, compounding and unsustainable loss of revenue due to record-low occupancy rates. For example, one 66-bed community spent \$270,000 to

cover additional staffing costs and an extra \$110,000 on equipment and supplies while experiencing \$112,000 in lost revenue from the beginning of the pandemic through December 31, 2020; a 127 bed enriched housing program and assisted living program community spent \$571,000 on additional staffing costs, equipment and supplies and lost approximately \$652,000 in revenue; and finally, another 130 -bed community continues to spend \$20,000 per month in additional expenses, as revenue has dropped 23% due to reduced occupancy rates.

New York has mandated that ACFs/ALRs test all staff weekly for COVID-19. Based on a survey conducted last year, providers spent approximately \$18.5 million in just May and June of 2020 to comply with this mandate. As you know, weekly staff testing is still required for these providers.

Unfortunately, these communities have received no State assistance and little federal aid to offset these extraordinary expenses. Under the federal CARES Act's Provider Relief Fund, ACFs/ALRs/ALPs have been able to access \$1 billion nationwide (compared to \$12.5 billion for skilled nursing facilities serving the same number of residents). A very small fraction of this amount was received by New York operators. Approximately 56% of ACF/ALR providers are experiencing operating losses and many operators are facing the prospect of closure. It is important to recognize the integral role senior living plays in the lives of our residents and their families and as a community- based option to preserve for future generations. In addition, senior living providers play a critical role in the health care continuum, delaying or preventing more costly government funded skilled nursing care and preserving Medicaid for the most financially challenged seniors.

Due to these unprecedented circumstances, we respectfully request your support of a one-time \$75 million allocation in the FY 2021-22 State budget to offset a fraction of the additional expenses and losses incurred by adult care facilities, assisted living residences and assisted living programs during the COVID pandemic.

Sincerely,



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