November 2, 2020

Hon. Andrew Cuomo

Governor of the State of New York

Executive Chamber

State Capitol Albany NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I write on behalf of the Empire State Association of Assisted Living’s (ESAAL) 300+ licensed Adult Care Facilities, Assisted Living Residences and Assisted Living Programs to express great concern and frustration that New York State has not authorized the re-opening of hair salons within these residences. We have advocated with Department of Health officials for months, since New York allowed the reopening of hair salons in the outer community in early July. We have demonstrated how hair salons in assisted living communities can be reopened safely, promoting measures such as allowing for one resident and one hair stylist at a time, weekly testing for the hair stylist just as these communities test their staff, and deep cleaning before and after any appointment, all under the supervision of senior management. Regrettably, despite our best efforts, there has been no progress on this issue. In fact, we have yet to be provided any explanation for the lack of policy guidance or even engage in a dialogue on addressing possible concerns.

It is important to understand that this inaction has had significant negative physical and mental health impact on our residents. First, some residents are leaving the assisted living community, usually with a family member, to get their hair done in a hair salon in the town. Then, because they are out, maybe they go to lunch or visit family members or friends. **This unnecessarily exposes them to the virus and keeping them safe is entirely out of the assisted living provider’s control.**  Then, they return and potentially infect other residents or staff. For those residents who do not go to an outer hair salon, the lack of grooming for almost eight months has a terrible impact on their self-image and mental health. It further contributes to resident depression that our provider members desperately work to stave off during this prolonged period of necessary isolation. It only adds stress to the resident, staff, and family members.

Governor Cuomo, this is a cry for help. Please allow our ACFs/ALRs/ALPs to re-open their hair salons. Please do not respond with only more silence.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lisa Newcomb

Executive Director

cc. Dr. Howard Zucker

 Melissa DeRosa