



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Press Contacts:  
Audrey Cohen  
Jackie Savage  
Epoch 5 Public Relations  
[acohen@epoch5.com](mailto:acohen@epoch5.com)  
[jsavage@epoch5.com](mailto:jsavage@epoch5.com)

**NEW YORK STATE CONTINUES TO DENY ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENTS  
ON-SITE HAIR SERVICES PUTTING THEIR HEALTH & WELL-BEING AT RISK**

**THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS FRUSTRATED AND DISTRESSED,  
GOING ON EIGHT MONTHS WITHOUT HAIR CARE**

**Clifton Park, NY, October 22, 2020** – For most, including our country’s senior population, maintaining good grooming is vital to living a healthy life. However, for the past eight months, despite the Empire State Association of Assisted Living’s (ESAAL) fervent efforts, New York State’s Department of Health continues to put thousands of seniors’ health at risk by keeping New York’s 550 licensed adult care facilities’ (ACFs) hair salons closed. Since March, tens of thousands of seniors throughout New York State have not had their hair cut pushing them to either live with overgrown hair, or jeopardize their health by forcing them to leave their assisted living residence for their haircare needs.

“It’s not only perplexing but directly putting our residents in harms way,” comments Lisa Newcomb, ESAAL’s Executive Director, “Months ago, when public hair salons in the community were first allowed to re-open, we made the request to the Department that our in-house salons be allowed to reopen, of course with the same safety measures built in such as only allowing one resident and one hairstylist at a time, weekly testing of the hairstylist, and stringent infection control measures in between. Yet here we are, with a deafening silence and much to their distress and mental anguish, some assisted living residents have not had their hair cut or styled since the shutdown began eight months ago.”

The Department of Health has allowed assisted living communities to resume communal dining and small group activities, but still has not allowed them to re-open their hair salons despite the pleas of residents and their family members. Notably, the state agency has not provided any explanation as to why they have not allowed this important service to resume. Critically, residents of assisted living communities are permitted to leave their housing during the day; as



a result many residents are venturing into the community and, in doing so, increasing their risk of being exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

“My Mom is 97 years old and has lived at the Terrace at Newark, located in Newark, New York for almost five years. She really enjoys being there. She likes all the different activities and being around lots of people. Now eight months later, with Governor Cuomo not allowing hair salons in these facilities to re-open, even though he allowed all other community salons in the state to re-open, my mom, and all the residents, are frustrated with their outgrown and unmanageable hair!,” says Karen Norton, a Terrace at Newark Family Member and Daughter to Resident Ginny. “She asks me almost daily ‘When can I get my hair cut?’... and I don't have a reasonable answer to that! To take my mom into the community for a hair cut would result in her being put into a quarantine situation for 10 days, in a room unknown to her, without her possessions, pictures, phone service etc. This, I'm afraid, would affect her mental well-being.”

“The state needs to allow the Terrace to re-open the hair salon while following the same safety protocol as required elsewhere,” continued Norton. “If you look good then you feel good! The residents deserve that.”

“Governor Cuomo began allowing independent hair salons across New York State to open on July 6<sup>th</sup>. It's time those located in assisted living communities open up as well, following the same safety protocols as required elsewhere,” continued Newcomb. There is no reason this can't be done safely. It must be addressed.”

“These hair salons need to reopen now,” said Assemblyman Brian Manktelow (R-C-I-Lyons) “We've seen salons reopen safely in the community and there is no reason the same precautions can't be used in assisted living centers. I have full confidence in the operators of these facilities and their ability to assure that everyone is safe. It is important for the mental health of these residents to have a stylist to wash and cut their hair and offer other services to make them feel pampered, especially in light of all they've been through recently. “

### **About Empire State Association of Assisted Living**

**Empire State Association of Assisted Living is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to strengthening New York State's assisted living sector and promoting the best interests of providers and residents. Founded in 1979, ESAAL is the only association that exclusively represents the assisted living industry, serving 300 Assisted Living Residences, Adult Homes, Enriched Housing Programs and Assisted Living Programs throughout New York State. These member residences are home to more than 30,000 seniors.**

# # #