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## **Assisted Living Providers, Residents, and Families Frustrated by New York State Inaction**

**Clifton Park, New York – September 8, 2020** – According to the Empire State Association of Assisted Living (ESAAL), there continues to be no progress made working with the New York State Department of Health, to reopen hair salons and make family visitation more workable in assisted living communities.

“While we have been seeking permission from the State to reopen hair salons in our member communities for months now, we continue to be disappointed and frustrated by the lack of flexibility. This one semblance of a return to normalcy for our seniors would have an enormously positive impact on their quality of life,” comments ESAAL Executive Director Lisa Newcomb. “And when it comes to easing the rule that visitation for all residents must shut down for 28 days if there is a staff member or resident that newly tests positive, there are still many assisted living communities that don’t qualify. The state continues to have a more rigid rule than the CDC.”

ESAAL and its members are deeply concerned about the toll this is taking on residents. While assisted living staff is doing their best to fill-in for family members as much as they can, they have job duties that they must fulfill. Those duties have all become more time consuming because of the need for frequent cleaning and disinfecting. Moreover, they cannot replace the residents’ loved ones. Residents are sad and some feel abandoned. Depression is growing and they are losing their appetites. Each day when they look in a mirror, they see their hair that has not been cut or done for more than five months. Yet the State has done nothing.

ESAAL asks every assisted living family member and friend to contact the State (email [covidadultcareinfo@health.ny.gov](mailto:covidadultcareinfo@health.ny.gov) and [cuomo@exec.ny.gov](mailto:cuomo@exec.ny.gov) or call (518) 474-8390) frequently to emphasize the tremendous need for these quality of life measures to be put in place, and to reach out to their local media organizations to continue to raise public awareness about this injustice.

“Seniors move into assisted living to **live**,” Newcomb says, “not to be confined to their room or apartment, without visitors or the basic dignity of getting a haircut. These activities can be done safely,

keeping in mind that our residents' mental health well-being is as important as their physical health. The situation is untenable and we implore the State to take action."

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.

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