

December 17, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor
State of New York
NYS State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Re: A.6590-B/S.4652-B

Dear Governor Hochul,

LeadingAge New York and its not-for-profit, mission-driven long-term care members write to you today in support of legislation A.6590-B (Kelles)/S.4652-B (May), or the "Investing in Care Act". This legislation directs the commissioner to study, develop, and propose how to implement a long-term strategy to support the growth of the caregiving industry in New York state. Such strategy would be based on an analysis of the financial support needed to help grow caregiving industry business and non-profits, develop the caregiving workforce via recruitment and retention needs, and support innovation and new models of caregiving delivery.

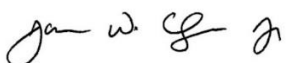
It is no secret that the caregiving workforce is among the most depleted, under-funded, and perhaps under-valued group of workers in the state. We have known for some-time that the State is under-going a significant change in demographics in which our working-age population is shrinking and our aging population is growing. Between 2015 and 2040, the number of adults aged 65 and over will increase by 50 percent, and the number of adults over 85 will double. In another alarming trend, at the same time the percentage of our population over age 65 is growing, the percentage between ages 18 and 64 is shrinking. We are already feeling the effects of a shortage of working-age caregivers for our parents, grandparents, and neighbors. Today, there are only approximately four working-age adults for every adult over age 65 in New York and 29 working-age adults for every adult over age 85.

The number of people available to care for an expanding older adult population is declining, and we have not done enough proactively as a State to bolster our caregiving workforce and help attract quality workers to the field of long-term care (LTC), specifically. As a result of lack of investment and attention in our LTC workforce, we are now in a place where the lack of available nurses and caregivers is being felt by many and is actually preventing many older adults from receiving the care that they need. Lack of available staff in nursing homes, adult care facilities and home care agencies is preventing these providers from taking on new patients and residents. This is now delaying discharges from hospitals, which in turn reduces the hospital beds available to individuals in need of acute care.

A direct funding initiative and strategy around addressing the needs of our caregiving workforce, particularly for long-term care, is long over-due. Moreover, by prioritizing the support and needs of our caregiving workforce, we will also enable other working-age adults, who may have previously left their jobs to care for a loved one, to return to work with the knowledge that their loved one can receive high-quality care from a paid professional or paraprofessional.

For these reasons, LeadingAge NY urges the Governor to approve A.5847 (Woerner)/S.2191 (Kavanagh) and sign the Investing in Care Act into law.

Sincerely,



James W. Clyne, Jr.
President and CEO
LeadingAge New York