**To send a letter to Commissioner of Health Howard Zucker requesting a reduction of HERDS reporting requirements:**

**Please fill in the yellow highlighted signature section of the below draft letter, copy and paste the entire message into an email, and send to** **dohweb@health.ny.gov****.**

**DRAFT LETTER TO COMMISSIONER**

***Subject: Please Reduce COVID-Related Reporting Requirements for Nursing Homes and ACFs***

Dear Commissioner Zucker,

I am writing to ask that the state reduce the onerous daily and weekly pandemic-related reporting requirements for adult care facilities (ACFs) and nursing homes. The volume and frequency of COVID-related data collection through HERDS has expanded and evolved over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the importance of data; however, with the conclusion of the public health emergency, it is time for daily reporting requirements to stop. Much of these data are either no longer necessary, not needed on a daily basis, or duplicative of data collected by the federal government. In fact, the Department has reduced the frequency of reporting for hospitals, certified home health agencies and hospice providers. Like patients of hospitals, CHHAs and hospice programs, nursing home residents require close and constant attention. The daily and weekly reporting requirements for ACFs and nursing homes divert valuable staff time from overseeing resident care.

Dedicated ACF and nursing home leaders have been collecting and submitting the information requested in these surveys daily, 7 days per week, since March 2020. There are over 85 fields in this daily survey, and additional information is collected in a weekly survey focused on COVID staff testing. There has been no reprieve from the requirement on weekends or holidays, and violations have been issued for being even one minute late.

Nursing homes and ACFs across the state are experiencing workforce challenges. We simply do not have excess staff available with the skills and experience to provide back-up in completing reports of this complexity and the importance. As a result, this daily requirement interferes with the submitters’ daily management of the facility and interactions with residents and families. It also interferes with their personal lives. Providers have been cited for submitting a daily HERDS survey late on Christmas. They fret if they have an event that brings them to a place where there is no internet connection. The reporting has interfered with family wedding celebrations, medical procedures, and weekend excursions when access to the internet is limited.

At this point in the pandemic, the level of information requested is unreasonable. For example, it is not at all clear why information such as inventory and burn rates of PPE must be collected daily, given the stability of the current PPE supply. The state should utilize data that is being reported to the CDC’s NHSN system and eliminate any duplicative or unnecessary questions. Any remaining data needed should be reported on a weekly basis.

New York State should prioritize resident care over unnecessary and duplicative reporting. We should also show our thanks and appreciation to the heroes of this pandemic who have been working every day for over a year to keep residents of ACFs and nursing homes safe and provide the best possible qualify of life. We must start letting go of unnecessary onerous requirements and allow administrative energy to be directed to resident quality of life, overall recovery from COVID, and staff recruitment and retention strategies.

Sincerely,

NAME

ORGANIZATION