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Governor Cuomo Proclaims September Assisted Living Month *Empire State Association of Assisted Living (ESAAL) Champions Benefits of Licensed Assisted Living*

Clifton Park, NY – Governor Andrew Cuomo has proclaimed September Assisted Living Month in recognition of the more than 2 million New Yorkers that will need some form of long-term care by 2015, and assisted living is a viable option that provides a comfortable setting for New York’s seniors. ESAAL received the proclamation on Wednesday, September 14.

In observance of Assisted Living Month, ESAAL members throughout the state are hosting a number of events in September, bringing together residents, families, employees, volunteers and the surrounding community.

According to ESAAL Executive Director Lisa Newcomb, Assisted Living Month presents a unique occasion for all aging New Yorkers and their families to think about their future long-term care needs and consider assisted living as a desirable option. “Today, the number of elderly Americans is dramatically increasing,” said Newcomb. “Specifically, New York’s population of residents age 65 and older is expected to grow by nearly half a million by 2015. Access to quality, affordable long-term care is a necessity.”

ESAAL began the Assisted Living Month celebration with the release of a new video detailing the benefits of residing in a state licensed assisted living residence, adult home, enriched housing program, or assisted living program. It is available at www.esaal.org. The New York State Department of Health oversees the operation of 492 residences in state.

In 2004, state lawmakers adopted a comprehensive reform package that required all assisted living residences, adult homes, enriched housing programs, and assisted living programs to comply with stricter regulations and frequent inspections. “Unfortunately, there are still a number of facilities providing assisted living-like services without a license, compromising the safety of their residents,” said Newcomb. “Our new video is a conversation starter. We hope to educate consumers about the services and resident protections required by law and encourage them to inquire with management if the residence itself is licensed by the New York State Department of Health.

“Licensing is an important form of consumer protection for our seniors,” said Newcomb. “We must require those we entrust to care for our aging loved ones when they can no longer live at home safely to have a license.”

New York has three types of licensed residences: adult homes, enriched housing programs and assisted living residences. While accommodations vary among facilities, they all offer a home-like atmosphere and are dedicated to preserving the dignity and independence of residents.

Some residences in New York State are licensed to provide “aging in place” programs which allow seniors to remain in their current assisted living setting even as they begin to require more specialized care. One of these programs, known as the Assisted Living Program (ALP), enables seniors to utilize Medicaid for assisted living expenses. Other residences such as Enhanced Assisted Living Residences and Special Needs Assisted Living Residences accommodate seniors that have higher needs due to either dementia or physical limitations.

“I urge seniors and their families who are unfamiliar with assisted living to contact and visit a local licensed residence during Assisted Living Month,” said Newcomb. “At less than one-half of the cost of a nursing home, assisted living is a safe, cost-effective community-based option for New York’s seniors.”

For more information about New York State Assisted Living Month, or for details about events in your region, please visit www.esaal.org.

A copy of the proclamation as well as a membership listing broken out per region are attached.