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## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Disability Rights Community Applauds the Legislature for Passing Bills Designed to Promote Community Living**

Albany, NY – Disability rights advocates applaud the New York State legislature for passing multiple bills to allow people with disabilities to live safely in the community. The creation of a new class of home care worker, the Advanced Home Health Aide (AHHA) passed the legislature in the last days of session. Disability rights advocates have been promoting this bill for the past several years as it will allow many more individuals to leave nursing homes and other institutions and live safely in the community.

“Too many older New Yorkers and people with disabilities are in nursing facilities when they want to be home. The creation of Advanced Home Health Aides able to perform advanced tasks like helping someone take their medicine, is a step towards helping them come back home,” states Susan Dooha, Chair of the New York Association on Independent Living and the Executive Director for the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York. “We commend Assemblymember Glick and Senator LaValle for introducing A10707/S8110. We express our gratitude to the legislature for passing these bills. We look forward to the Governor signing this vital legislation,” added Dooha.

The bill will allow “advanced home health aides” (AHHAs) to perform certain advanced tasks, such as distributing medications and pre-filled injections, to patients under the supervision of a registered nurse. These tasks are already being performed under the Consumer Directed Personal Attendant Program (CDPAP). However, many seniors and people with disabilities are unable to take on the responsibilities that comes with self-directing. These individuals have had to rely mostly on either family members performing these tasks, or have had to remain in nursing homes and other institutions.

“We are thrilled that the Legislature has passed the law that will create AHHAs. This bill will dramatically expand access to health related tasks for people with disabilities and seniors in New York,” said Adam Prizio, Manager of Government Affairs at the Center for Disability Rights. “Thousands of New Yorkers remain trapped in institutions because simple tasks like medication administration or assistance with a ventilator were not available for a home health attendant to do. Thanks to the work of the many, many legislators, policymakers, and advocates who have supported the AHHA proposal, many of those trapped New Yorkers will be free.”

The legislature also passed a bill A9303/S6943 to provide for a tax credit of up to \$2,750 for seniors and people with disabilities to modify their homes to make it more accessible. In addition, people can access this credit when they include accessible features at the time of construction.

“The lack of accessible housing is the biggest barrier for many people seeking to leave nursing homes. Very often, a ramp to the front door is the difference between a person being able to live safely in their homes and needing to go into a nursing home. We applaud the legislature for passing this bill, which will assist seniors and people with disabilities, many of whom are on fixed incomes, to make their home more accessible,” stated Lindsay Miller, Executive Director for the New York Association on Independent Living.

The legislature passed this bill last year but it was vetoed by Governor Cuomo. In his veto memo, Cuomo indicated his support for the concept but stated it needed to be done in the context of the Budget. The proposal was updated by the bill sponsors, Senator DeFrancisco and Assemblymember Lavine, to start as a pilot funded at \$1 million annually to address concerns regarding unknown costs. “We urge the Governor to maintain his commitment to encouraging the growth of accessible housing for people with disabilities and older adults by signing the visitability tax credit program into law” added Miller.

In addition, disability rights advocates vehemently opposed proposed legislation seeking to legalize assisted suicide and transportation network companies operating outside of New York City. The disability community has long opposed any bill which would legalize assisted suicide in New York due to the dangers it poses for people with disabilities. Further, the disability community is deeply opposed to the State allowing any new transportation system to operate in the State without ensuring accessibility to all people with disabilities. The disability rights community is thrilled that these bills did not pass this session despite the strong lobby powers working in support of both proposals.