



## The Empire State Association of Adult Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

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### **Governor's Veto of SSI Funding Puts Vulnerable Elderly and Disabled Adult Home Residents at Risk**

Calling it a "terrible blow to elderly and disabled New Yorkers," the Empire State Association of Adult Homes and Assisted Living Facilities today expressed surprise and outrage over Governor Pataki's Budget veto of a desperately-needed Supplemental Security Income (SSI) increase for New York's adult home residents.

"The Governor's veto is profoundly disappointing," said Jim Kane, President of the Empire State Association of Adult Homes and Assisted Living Facilities. "New York State has a constitutional – and moral – responsibility to care for its most vulnerable citizens. The SSI increase provided a viable future for adult homes and their residents. That future is now imperiled."

The Governor's veto of \$3 million provided in the Legislature's spending plan would have increased the SSI rate for adult homes by \$3 per day, beginning January 1, 2005. The increase was to be the first phase of a multi-year plan to raise the SSI rate for adult care facilities by \$7 per day.

More than fifteen thousand adult home residents — approximately 40 percent of the New York's total adult home population — rely on SSI for their care. The woefully inadequate SSI rate of \$28 per day is used to provide food, shelter, activities, personal care, case management, medication management and 24-hour-a-day supervision to adult home residents.

The State portion of SSI has not been increased since 1988. Over that same time period, the consumer price index has increased by 40 percent and the medical consumer price index has increased by more than 84 percent. The failure of the SSI rate to keep up with annual inflationary costs has put New York's adult home providers in a state of financial crisis. Without an SSI increase in 16 years, this critical component of the health care continuum is in a state of crisis. 80 adult homes have closed over the last three years, and an additional 22 have announced plans to close since May of this year.

As a result of these closures, hundreds of vulnerable elderly and disabled New Yorkers have been forced into either homelessness or unnecessary, inappropriate placement in institutional settings such as nursing homes, hospitals and psychiatric centers at a far greater cost to the state. Without this needed funding, dozens of homes will close in the near future.

"This SSI increase would have made it possible for many financially-strapped adult home providers to remain open," continued Mr. Kane. "Without it, adult homes throughout the state will continue to close at alarming rates, forcing thousands of vulnerable New Yorkers to look for another home."

To add insult to injury, the Governor also vetoed \$3.5 million included in the Budget by the Legislature for the Quality Incentive Payment Program (QUIP). QUIP is a legislatively-funded program that provides assistance to adult homes which are in good standing for renovations and repairs or enhanced services for residents.