



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Cusick, Lanza & Savino Announce Legislation Requiring Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan in New York City

ANDREW J LANZA June 19, 2014

### *Bill Passes Both Houses and Gives Home Health Care Workers Emergency Status to Help Patients in Need*

Assemblyman Michael Cusick (D - Mid-Island), Senator Andrew Lanza and Senator Diane Savino today announced passage of their legislation, A.6530-B/S.4719-B, which would require New York City to adopt a comprehensive emergency management plan and include provisions for the deployment of home health aides and hospice caregivers during local emergencies.

The bill, which passed both the Senate and the Assembly this legislative session, gives home health aides and hospice caregivers the designation as “essential personnel” in cases of declared emergencies. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, home health aides, therapists and hospice caregivers played a vital role in response to the disaster, reaching vulnerable patients in need of services, supplies or support with evacuation.

“During times of crisis, home care providers are essential in providing critical support to the elderly, disabled and chronically ill patients who are in their care each and every day,” said Assemblyman Cusick. “What we saw during and after the storm was complete chaos with scores of home care workers unable to reach their patients. There were roadblocks set up to limit traffic to emergency workers only and gas shortages that delayed their ability to reach those in desperate need of care.”

Senator Andrew Lanza said, “While many businesses shut down during Hurricane Sandy to ensure that their employees could remain safely inside, our underpaid nurses and home aides confronted Sandy head-on, actually increasing their hours to tend to the patients who depend on in-home medical care. During and after the storm, aides shared rides to cope with gas shortages and mass transit shutdowns, took over each other's patients when proximity and logistics demanded, and shared supplies, meals and support as they continued bringing quality care to the vulnerable Americans. This bill will assist our home health care workers whose services are critical in the face of an emergency.”

“This legislation is a common sense measure that grants the home health care workers “essential personnel” status, allowing them to use their vehicles to get to patients in such an emergency. They also would be exempt from any emergency curfews. In the midst of this crisis, homebound individuals went without medicine, supplies and basic daily care that they normally received from their nurses and aides. Most were without heat and electricity further exacerbating an already dangerous situation. The home care workers certainly should be commended for their valiant efforts to reach their patients. In so many cases, they walked, lugging supplies, took public transportation, climbed numerous flights of stairs with only a flashlight to shine the way to get to their homebound patients. Seeing first-hand the critical problems that arose, I want to ensure the safety of my community should another disaster strike,” said Assemblyman Cusick.

"During and after Superstorm Sandy my office received countless stories of home health aides abandoned people requiring assistance to evacuate, Access-a-Ride reservation line shut down 24 hours before the storm and our most vulnerable where the ones who paid the price, this legislation ensures that will never happen again." Said State Senator Diane Savino.

The bill will be delivered to the Governor.

