May 20, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Andrew Cuomo,

We are home attendants from various home care agencies of New York State. We take care of senior patients. Many of us have been working 24-hour workdays with only 13 hours of pay!

In New York, the epicenter of COVID-19, home attendants are frontline workers who risk the possibility of infection as we travel to take care of the most vulnerable populations. However, the home care agencies, insurance companies and you, Governor Cuomo, ignore the health and rights of us home attendants and our patients. The agencies and insurance companies don’t provide us enough protective gear or offer us safe transportation for work (it’s impossible to maintain social distancing on public transportation), putting both us workers and the patients in life-threatening danger.

In this pandemic, you continue to disregard our health and the health of the patients we care for, treating us as expendable. Your actions show you do not care. Is it because you would like us and our patients to die, so that the insurance companies can make more money?

Shame on you! We support the call of the Ain’t I A Woman?! Campaign and demand you immediately order insurance companies and home care agencies to:

- Provide sufficient protective gear such as masks, gloves, gowns, hand sanitizers, disinfectant sprays, hand soaps
- Arrange car service paid by the agencies for home attendants to travel to and from work, until the government improves the subway service and other public transportation to make social distancing possible
- Recognize home attendants as health care workers, and offer virus tests for home attendants and the patients they are taking care of at their homes
- Protect the health of the home attendants and patients by requiring patients’ families to comply with Matilda’s law; if there is non-compliance, home attendants who quit because of health concerns should be made eligible for UI
- Stop 24-hour workdays immediately; however, if the home attendant agrees to stay for 24-hour shifts due to safety concerns related to the pandemic, the home attendants should be paid 24 hours of wages, including overtime wages

If you continue to ignore our lives and rights, we will not be able to go to work, because of the lack of protections necessary for us and our patients, and concerns about spreading the virus. We are forced to make this choice for the health and safety of both ourselves and our patients!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Home attendants committee - Alvaro Ramirez, Blanca Minchala, Lai Yee Chan, Gui Hua Song
Ain’t I A Woman?! Campaign
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