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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

December 31, 2020

Hon. Andrew Cuomo
Governor
State of New York
Capitol
Albany NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I write to request that home health aides be on the list as “priority” for the vaccine. Just this week, a family who is supported by a dedicated home health aide was told that the husband of the home health aide tested positive for Covid-19. The home health aide did not know until recently that her husband had Covid, and she has been coming regularly to the home. Now everyone in the family is getting tested, but they have all been in close quarters in the apartment.

Representatives of the disabled community on a recent zoom brought up the same issue. They want their home health aides to be able to access the vaccine at the same time that essential workers in the hospitals and nursing homes are getting vaccines as they too are essential workers. In fact, they need the support even more as they are working in apartments and homes and social distancing is not possible.

It is of great concern that families who desperately need the help of a home health aide for themselves or for a family member who might be in a wheelchair, in bed, or homebound for other reasons must risk their lives on a daily basis because of someone coming into their home. And this home health aide risks her life because she needs the job and because she has empathy about the person she is caring for.

Again, I am requesting that home health aides be on the list at the same time (Phase 1) that those in the hospitals and in the nursing homes are able to access the vaccine.

Sincerely,

Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President