Good day, Chairperson Burzichelli and members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee. My name is Cathy Chin and I am testifying on behalf of ABCD. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on A5123 which requires group homes to implement policies to prevent social isolation of residents.

ABCD members because of the enhanced pandemic rate, are currently providing the level of services and supports outlined in this legislation. But if equipment and supports must remain at this level at all times, then we respectfully request that an appropriation be included to ensure that providers have the resources to comply because our rates are not structured to include these additional costs. Our current FFS system was built intending that agencies which retained earnings resulting from efficiencies were to use these funds to address planned capital expenditures such as major maintenance and vehicle replacement; expenditures which the Division no longer funds directly. As it is, many agencies are instead having to use these savings to cover unintended expenditures, namely, losses in day programs in need of structural rate reform.

We respectfully request your consideration in adding additional funds so that the resources needed to comply with A5123 are reflected in the rate architecture.

Thank you.