



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO URGES STATE TO CREATE SPECIALTY CARE CENTERS TO RELOCATE COVID-19 PATIENTS FROM VULNERABLE FACILITIES

SUSAN SERINO April 24, 2020

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HYDE PARK, NY—With COVID-19 infections climbing at alarming rates in long-term care facilities across New York, Senator Sue Serino is calling on the state to take an innovative approach to protect vulnerable residents. Serino today released an open letter to the Governor, and the NYS Health Commissioner, urging them to immediately move to create Specialty COVID-19 Long-Term Care Centers across the state.

“In order to save lives, we need to be doing all we can to prevent contact between COVID-19 patients and these vulnerable residents, that’s the bottom line,” said Senator Serino. “Right now, every nursing home in the state is expected to accept COVID-19 patients when the need arises—a policy that absolutely defies commonsense. Creating these specialty care centers would give us the opportunity to truly isolate these patients, ensure they are receiving the highest level of care, and glean valuable information that could ultimately help us protect countless New Yorkers.”

The State has the ability to designate specialty care centers to acutely address and research unique public health concerns. **Serino’s plan would have the state utilize this approach to address this crisis by creating a series of these Specialty COVID-19 Long-Term Care Centers regionally across New York.**

In this regard, the state would incentivize one nursing home or adult care facility in each region to serve as the specialty facility by:

- enhancing their reimbursements;
- concentrating skilled staff at the center, negating the risk of any staffing shortage at any point;
- providing a guarantee that the facility would have access to a full and regular supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing provisions;
- providing their staff with priority testing;
- assisting in developing and executing any necessary building modifications to ensure that anyone recovering from COVID-19 remain completely isolated;
- encouraging a partnership with a leading laboratory to ensure test results are received in the shortest effective amount of time;
- allowing facilities to use and report on experimental COVID-19 drugs and therapies; and
- encouraging a research partnership with a leading institution to ensure that information gleaned from these centers can assist in developing best practices for all long-term care facilities.

Serino's full letter can be found here: https://www.nysenate.gov/sites/default/files/press-release/attachment/serino_ltc_specialty_care_centers_letter_final_pdf.pdf

The proposal builds on the comprehensive plan recently released by Senator Serino to help enforce transparency and accountability within nursing homes and adult care facilities, which can be found here: <https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/sue-serino/serino-state-ramp-protections-nursing-home-residents-o>

Senator Serino is the Ranking Member of the State Senate's Aging Committee.