



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Senator Borrello Calls on Governor to Help Nursing Homes Meet New Testing Requirements

GEORGE M. BORRELLO May 14, 2020

| ISSUE: **COVID-19 TESTS, NURSING HOMES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**



ALBANY, NY – Senator George Borrello called on Governor Cuomo today to assist the state’s nursing homes in meeting the new requirement to implement twice-weekly COVID-19 testing of their employees, noting that testing kit availability at that volume is simply not available in many regions of the state and that most facilities do not have the resources needed to purchase tests at that scale.

“Everyone supports taking extra precautions to help protect our vulnerable nursing home residents and most facilities have been very diligent throughout this crisis in providing daily employee temperature screenings and health assessments. The Governor’s Executive Order requiring nursing home employees to be tested twice a week is good in concept, but impossible for most facilities to execute without hands-on partnership from the state,” said Senator George Borrello.

“I’ve spoken with several nursing home administrators in my district who have spent the last week frantically making calls to try to determine if accessing tests in such a large quantity is even possible. What they have discovered is that it’s not. Even if the tests were available, these homes do not have the financial resources to absorb such a massive, unanticipated cost, particularly with the state’s recent cutbacks in Medicaid reimbursement rates.”

He noted that if the Governor is truly committed to ensuring twice-weekly testing of nursing home employees, then he should direct the Department of Health (DOH) to provide these resources at no cost to the state’s nursing homes, as that is the only practical way to achieve the goal.

Senator Borrello also pointed to the fact that the Cuomo administration has come under criticism for policies that many believe hastened the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes, resulting in 5,300 deaths.

“Under the Governor’s leadership, the Department of Health implemented COVID-19 related policies for our state’s nursing homes that were misguided, at best. Now, nursing homes are being punished for those bad decisions as the administration attempts to reverse course by instituting a testing policy that is logistically impossible for most nursing homes. If the state wants this to happen, they need to step up and provide nursing homes with the tests.”

Senator Borrello's request to the Governor is outlined in the attached letter.

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