



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO TO STATE: NEW YORKERS DESERVE ANSWERS ON NURSING HOME DEATHS

SUSAN SERINO July 3, 2020

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HYDE PARK, NY—Following **reports** of major staff shakeups within the State Department of Health and **news** that the state may be grossly underreporting the number of nursing home deaths, Senator Sue Serino today is calling on the Legislature to immediately set an official date for a hearing on the state's response to the ongoing crisis within New York's nursing homes.

"Months of state inaction have left countless New Yorkers even more vulnerable to the crisis unfolding in our nursing homes, assisted living and adult care facilities," said Senator Sue Serino. "We have a duty to do all that we can to protect these residents, and those who care for them, and that starts by looking critically at the state's response. High-level officials with knowledge of the state's policies already have one foot out the door, and a hearing date has yet to be determined. The Legislature must act immediately to set a date and get New Yorkers the answers they deserve."

In early May, Senator Serino and her colleagues were the first in the Legislature to call for an independent investigation into the state's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic within these facilities. Late last week it was reported that the State Legislature is finally looking to hold a hearing on this critically important topic, yet no official date has been publicly released.

The virus has hit New York's nursing homes disproportionately hard, with deaths in the facilities accounting for roughly one third of overall coronavirus-related deaths in the state between May 24 and June 14. A bombshell [report](#) released this week by the non-partisan Empire Center for Public Policy shows that the state may be severely underreporting the number of deaths by failing to account for those who contracted coronavirus within a nursing home but passed away after being transferred to a hospital. Their researchers argue that the actual number of deaths could be roughly doubled, from about 6,200 to more than 10,000.

"News of this drastic underreporting highlights why an investigation into the state's response is so critical," Serino continued. "From failing to prioritize PPE or additional staff for these facilities, to the March 25th directive that sent COVID-positive patients directly into vulnerable nursing homes, the state has failed to support these residents, or their facilities, repeatedly throughout the pandemic. Each day that passes without a hard look being taken at that response, puts more and more New Yorkers in harm's way. These residents and the facilities that care for them deserve better."

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

