



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## SERINO DEMANDS STATE DEPLOY RAPID TESTS TO NURSING HOMES TO PROTECT RESIDENTS, REUNITE LOVED ONES

SUSAN SERINO September 29, 2020

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HYDE PARK, NY—Following news that the federal government is directing millions of rapid tests to states for distribution, Senator Sue Serino today is calling on the state to immediately deliver a portion directly to nursing homes and residential care facilities to test staff and families desperate to safely visit loved ones.

It is reported the tests will be delivered to states based on population and that the federal government is giving discretion to Governors as to how to disperse the tests in their states.

*“While many of these tests will rightly go to schools to protect staff and students, a portion of them must be delivered directly to vulnerable nursing homes to more efficiently test staff, as well as family members who have gone months without seeing their loved ones,” said Senator Sue Serino. “To date, the state has taken no meaningful steps to improve testing in these facilities, or to effectively reunite loved ones with residents whose mental and physical health is suffering as a result of isolation. The tests are being sent to the state directly by the federal government. New York needs to do the right thing and use them to address this immediate need and protect these particularly vulnerable New Yorkers.”*

Serino was the first lawmaker to recently highlight the difficulties the state continues to create for loved ones looking to reunite and to call on the state to make rapid testing for these facilities a priority. To date, that call has gone unanswered, but with tests now set to come directly to New York from the federal government, Serino argues there is no excuse for the state not to use them to address this immediate need.

At recent hearings held by the Legislature on the COVID-19 crisis in these facilities, multiple witnesses testified to the grave impact a lack of socialization and visitation has had on the mental and physical health of many residents. Healthcare professionals, loved ones, and residents alike testified in support of working to establish safe and healthy ways to increase visitation and pointed to the role increased testing could play in that effort.

*“Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, these facilities have been an after thought to the state, the voices of their residents and loved ones ignored,” Serino continued. “Enough is enough. We have the resources, now the state needs to have the will to truly address this situation and receiving these tests is an opportunity we cannot ignore.”*

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