

NEW YORK  
STATE  
LEGISLATURE



ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247

March 19, 2021

Dr. Howard Zucker, Commissioner  
New York State Department of Health  
Corning Tower  
Empire State Plaza,  
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Dr. Zucker:

We write in support of updating the current Department of Health (DOH) nursing home visitation guidelines to be consistent with recently approved Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) guidelines.

The inconsistency between state and federal nursing home visitation policies is creating confusion for nursing home operators and administrators and frustration for residents and their families who are eager to reunite.

There is no question that isolation has significantly impacted the health and well-being of senior citizens and others living in nursing homes. The stories of seniors dying alone, while family members have stood outside watching through a window, are heartwrenching.

Isolation is a killer and lives are being lost because people have and will continue to lose the will to live without the love and support of family members.

While we all want to keep COVID-19 out of nursing homes, many contend, and we agree, that the current DOH visitation guidelines may be doing more harm than good. Given the low infection rates in many communities, increased vaccinations, particularly to those most vulnerable, and accessibility of rapid tests, aligning DOH policies with CMS visitation guidelines would be a welcomed change for so many.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Daniel G. Stec in black ink.

Daniel G. Stec  
Senator, 45<sup>th</sup> District

Handwritten signature of Matt Simpson in black ink.

Matt Simpson  
Assemblyman, 114<sup>th</sup> District

Handwritten signature of Billy Jones in black ink.

Billy Jones  
Assemblyman, 115<sup>th</sup> District