

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



GEORGE M. BORRELLO
SENATOR
57TH DISTRICT

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May 14, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Since the announcement that nursing homes will soon be required to implement twice-weekly testing of their employees, I have received many calls from facilities in my district expressing great concern that they will be unable to comply with this requirement due to lack of testing kits in our rural area.

One nursing home system in Chautauqua County has been in contact with private healthcare providers as well as the county in an attempt to ascertain if the 2,200 tests per week that they will need for their employees are available. What they have found is that they simply are not available in that quantity in our region. Additionally, they do not have the resources to purchase kits in this massive quantity, even if they were available.

In light of these circumstances, I would like to respectfully request that the mandate be modified to require the state to ensure access to the tests that nursing homes need and to assume the related costs.

We all recognize the great risks that COVID-19 poses to our nursing home residents. In my conversations with the nursing homes in my district about their safety protocols, they've shared the extensive screening procedures they've been following which include daily temperature checks for each employee, assessment by a licensed nurse if they have any concerns or symptoms, and added hygiene and disinfection measures. As a result, nursing homes in my district have had very few cases and Chautauqua County nursing homes have not recorded a single COVID case to date.

These facilities are committed to the highest level of care and protection for their residents. They will be maintaining their effective screening practices and can add the twice-weekly employee testing if the state provides the tests. Practically speaking, that is the only way these small, rural nursing homes will be able to meet this new requirement.

I appreciate your consideration of my comments and request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George M. Borrello".

George M. Borrello
57th Senate District

cc: Dana Carotenuto, Deputy Secretary for Legislative Affairs
Lori Cornell, Regional Representative