

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



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April 18, 2022

Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Comprehensive COVID-19 State Report

Dear Governor Hochul:

A recent New York Times article<sup>1</sup> mentioned that you convened commissioners and other top officials in your administration in late March and tasked them with doing a deep dive into the State's COVID response, and that you wanted "the good, the bad and the ugly." As you know, given my previous correspondence to your office, I wholeheartedly agree that a comprehensive review of the State's response is essential, and I have been calling for as much since 2020—particularly as it relates to the State's COVID response with respect to nursing homes. The article stated that you asked for the report to be on your desk within two weeks, and I am writing to respectfully request a copy of that report and for it to be made public immediately.

No state was adequately prepared to handle this largely unprecedented pandemic, and New York State was in the unenviable position of being one of the first in the nation to see a significant outbreak. Now that we are all too well aware of the looming threat of global pandemics and the far-reaching disruptions they can cause, we must take steps today to ensure we are better prepared going forward. However, without a complete and accurate accounting of the State's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and an understanding of what went right and, just as importantly, what went wrong, we will be in no better position to effectively respond to a future outbreak than we were in March of 2020.

One of the clearest lessons we learned from the pandemic is that no single individual or entity can successfully respond to all the wide-ranging challenges posed by public health crises alone. Rather, proactive information sharing across a multitude of sectors and convening diverse stakeholders is crucial to developing an effective response.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/15/opinion/kathy-hochul-cuomo-scandal-glass-cliff.html>

In that vein, it is my hope that you will work with lawmakers, researchers, medical professionals and others to comprehensively assess and improve the State's public health response. The COVID response report from your commissioners and other top officials mentioned above can help inform fact-based policies to improve the State's handling of any future outbreaks. With less than two months of the scheduled 2022 Legislative Session remaining, it is critical that we get this information as soon as possible. While I intend to submit a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request for the full report, it is my hope that in the interest of transparency, your office will publicly release the report and render such a step unnecessary.

State government operates best when all stakeholders are at the table and have a clear picture of the facts at hand. Through more collaborative partnerships, New York can be better positioned to respond to future public health crises, but that can only be achieved if we all begin putting in the work now.

I appreciate your attention to this urgent matter, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Serino". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Sue Serino

41<sup>st</sup> District