

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



SUSAN SERINO
41ST District

ALBANY OFFICE
ROOM 613
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
(518) 455-2945
HYDE PARK OFFICE
4254 ALBANY POST ROAD
HYDE PARK, NEW YORK 12538
(845) 229-0106
PUTNAM OFFICE
117 TOWN PARK LANE
PUTNAM VALLEY, NEW YORK 10579
(845) 528-0417

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
AGING
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM, PARKS AND RECREATION

COMMITTEE MEMBER
FINANCE
INSURANCE
SOCIAL SERVICES
TRANSPORTATION

July 8, 2021

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D.
NYS Department of Health, Commissioner
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Re: Nursing Home Post-State Disaster Emergency Guidance

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker:

Nearly two weeks after the official end of the state disaster emergency, many questions remain unanswered pertaining to the health and safety protocols within New York's nursing homes. As you may know, it is being reported that many hard-hit facilities are confused as to which protocols they should keep following after at least thirty Executive Orders pertaining directly to care provided in these facilities expired with little notice. It is my understanding that facilities have questions on everything from visitation requirements, communal dining protocols, to the current status of workers who are not licensed in New York State hired during the pandemic, to any requirements that may still be in place for unvaccinated residents and staff, and more. I respectfully request that you make releasing answers to these questions, and resolving any discrepancies pertaining to policies that impact these facilities, an immediate priority.

Throughout the pandemic, New York lost over 15,000 residents to COVID in these facilities, and while the official state disaster emergency order may have expired, it is critical that we do not let our guard down when it comes to ensuring the highest level of health and safety in these facilities. We have a duty to protect these residents, staff, and loved ones, and our state cannot again leave these facilities in a limbo that could result in additional COVID-19 cases or deaths. If there is one thing the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us, it is that clear and consistent communication—especially from the State to these facilities—is key. With that in mind, I respectfully urge the Department of Health to work closely with nursing homes and residential healthcare facilities—and any and all industries still in limbo in the wake of New York's 15 month shutdown—to ensure all stakeholders clearly understand any relevant requirements so that they may concentrate their focus on

effectively serving those in their charge, rather than trying to make sense of unclear and ambiguous requirements.

I thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter, and I encourage you to work with the State Legislature to assist in resolving any issues related to this matter that may be beyond Executive authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Serino". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Senator Sue Serino
41st District