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Senator David Carlucci Requests Compassionate Helper Volunteer Program at Hospitals in NYS to Prevent Patients With COVID-19 From Dying Alone

(New City, NY) - One of the greatest tragedies of the COVID-19 pandemic has been hearing stories of patients in the hospital, dying alone. To help support overwhelmed hospital staff and patients, Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) spearheaded a letter to the New York Hospital systems on Thursday, requesting hospitals implement a first-ever, Compassionate Helper Volunteer Program.

Senator David Carlucci said, “The program we are suggesting would be made up of volunteers who can help lift patients' spirits. They can have conversations with patients, help with specific food requests, or assist in contacting the patient’s family. These volunteers can be there for patients who have no family. No New Yorker should die alone if we can prevent it.”

In the letter, Carlucci suggested hospitals identify volunteers who can aid hospital staff in non-medical, quality of life activities to ease a patient's and their family's fear due to separation. The Senator added these volunteers could strengthen cultural competency and overcome language barriers between patients and staff.

Carlucci recommended hospitals follow any volunteer protocols they already have in place; however, said there should be special training for the volunteers and personal protective equipment provided. The Senator also said volunteers could be prioritized for antibody testing to help ensure no one is sick.

“The State and city health departments can work with the hospitals to develop a selection process for these volunteers, training for these volunteers, and coordinating their deployment into hospitals,” **said Carlucci.**

Currently, 24 other state senators have joined Calucci in their support of a Compassionate Helper Volunteer Program at hospitals.