



NEWS FROM SENATOR SIMCHA FELDER

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Lentol – Felder Bill Paves the Way for Volunteer Compassionate Care Program

Assembly Member Joseph R. Lentol (D-Brooklyn) and Senator Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn) today introduced legislation creating the volunteer Compassionate Care Program, clearing the way for its quick and seamless enactment. State and City officials outlined a plan for the program in a letter to hospital administrators on April 24.

"When a loved one is hospitalized, family and friends routinely stay at their bedside to provide the comfort, care and assistance that we all know is vital to recovery. Unfortunately, the onset of this crisis necessitated patient isolation policies, but it is now clear that they are taking an additional toll on human life and leaving many more with deep emotional wounds. Doctors and nurses are racing, around the clock, to find and administer a cure that eludes us, while panicked family members are relying on them to provide health updates, deliver messages of love and hope and even to provide end of life prayers and customs. Meanwhile, patients are alone, scared, weak and often unable to communicate. I am certain that we can and must do better. I am grateful to Assembly Member Lentol for his leadership on this initiative," said Senator Felder.

"The COVID-19 Compassionate Helper Volunteer Program seeks to ease the pain and suffering of families due to separation during the COVID-19 crisis. The current reality of having a member of your family hospitalized is horrifying and heartbreaking. This pain is multiplied as families are unable to visit with their hospitalized family member, which is unbearable. Compassionate Helpers can ease a small portion of the demands placed on health care workers by sitting with patients and doing the extra work of care that is impossible for health care workers to attend to. Right now, we have volunteers doing all kinds of work, from dispensing food to delivering much needed supplies. This is a new way of volunteering, and with the right protection, I believe it can work. I thank Senator Felder for partnering with me to introduce this legislation in the Senate. As we progress through the COVID19 pandemic, we must find ways to ease the suffering of families while their loved ones are hospitalized," said Assembly Member Lentol.

Compassionate Care Volunteers will provide relief to providers and comfort to patients and families by addressing the stressors currently impacting the entire health care delivery system. Front line health care providers cannot continue doing all that is being asked of them during this trying time and families cannot tolerate the separation and isolation of their loved ones, as they lie sick and dying.

Expediting a process of antibody testing and appropriate safety training precautions, the program will appoint volunteer Covid-19 survivors to aid in comforting patients, facilitating electronic communication with family and helping overcome language barriers, alleviating overextended doctors and nurses of the non-medical burdens they currently carry.

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