

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 24, 2021
FOR MORE INFORMATION: 315-568-9816

Senator Helming Statement on Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker

Senator Pam Helming has released the following statement in advance of Dr. Howard Zucker's anticipated testimony at Thursday's health budget hearing:

"As I said after the facts revealed in the Attorney General's report, I have lost faith in Dr. Zucker's ability to lead the Department of Health and protect our seniors living in nursing homes and long-term care facilities, which his office regulates and oversees.

Dr. Zucker is not only an appointed civil servant but a licensed doctor, who by his professional oath, has promised to 'do no harm.'

Dr. Zucker neglected our seniors by failing to ensure that nursing homes were prepared and equipped to respond to residents' physical and mental health needs during the pandemic.

As the state's chief physician, he could have prevented the March 25 executive order requiring nursing homes to accept COVID-positive patients. Instead, he defended the policy and said, 'We made the right public health decision at the time, and faced with the same facts, we would make the same decisions again.'

His statement only reaffirms my belief that he must resign.

Dr. Zucker also botched the vaccine rollout, causing chaos and confusion for New Yorkers, hospitals and local health departments that continues today.

And let's not forget Dr. Zucker's job is to protect the health of all New Yorkers, who need information they can trust from people they can trust.

Dr. Zucker has lost my trust. I hope he will do the right thing – accept responsibility and resign his post as Health Commissioner."

###