

I am grateful for your investigation of nursing homes and health care in regards to covid 19 and the handling of the virus by N.Y.S. DOH, CMS and Gov. Cuomo.

My mother has been in a nursing home on Long Island for 12 years. She had a stroke 12 years ago and since I was unable to care for my mother I had to put her in a nursing home.. The beginning of March without any warning the nursing home had closed its doors to visitation by family members. I understood the reasoning as I wanted my mother to be safe. I knew covid was active and as I suspected been around since the beginning of the year. There was so much misinformation about covid and we were still learning about the virus. My mother was lucky , her facility did not have any active cases until the middle of April. The facility did separate the covid residents who came from the hospital. Unfortunately the facility was no where near prepared for the pandemic, They didn't have enough ppe's gowns, mask, antiseptic supplies etc. The facility didn't even have enough test kits for the residents. Many times they were waiting for the tests to be delivered. My mother did get the virus, I am thankful she did fight it off and is doing well, not everyone was as lucky. There were some deaths.

Doh send out a mandate that required nursing homes to admit covid residents. You can refuse and pay a fine but there would be repercussions. Basically it seems you can refuse but you would be in big trouble. Gov. Cuomo flip flopped with his orders claiming nursing home residents are sickly and vulnerable but denied knowing Doh mandated they take in covid residents. I tried calling Doh, Gov. Cuomo, senators, anyone who would take my call. Unfortunately nobody took my call or responded to my emails. I contacted civil liberties but they said it was out of their hands to contact Gov. Cuomo. I took to facebook and realized I wasn't alone but even as a group we couldn't reach anyone to help us.

It has been 5 months since I was able to kiss or touch my mother. We celebrated her 88th birthday celebrating through a window. Doh and Cms came up with the 28 covid free visitation rule. I dont understand if you contact covid you isolate for 14 days and if test negative you can go back to work but families have to wait 28 days. What are the chances of that happening with a second wave of virus around the corner. I can see a change in my mother's personality. She seems a little more withdrawn, not talking as much. It seems like nursing homes are being blamed for things that were out of their control. They have to answer to DOh, Cms and Gov Cuomo. It seems the state has forgot about the residents and their well being.

Nursing homes and family members are being punished by the state governments. The state has given group home, hospitals, and even prisoners permission to interact by just wearing a mask and obeying the 6' rule. This is against residents rights as well as family members. My mothers nursing home has done their best to take care of their residents and staff as best they could with the limited help they recieved from the government. Please investigate and hold Doh, Cms and Gov Cuomo responsible for the conditions they put these nursing home residents and the people who are responsible for taking care of them. Letting Doh investigate themselves is crazy. Thank you for listening. Stay safe and please release these residents from the prisons that the government has send them to.

Sincerely,
Sharon Blumstein

