



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Senator Gallivan Renews Call for Independent Investigation of COVID-19 in Nursing Homes

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) is renewing his call for an independent investigation into the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on nursing homes in New York State. Back in May, Gallivan suggested the Senate Committee on Health hold hearings on how nursing homes were dealing with the virus and how Department of Health regulations and directives were affecting the spread of the infection.

At issue is a March 25 directive from the Department of Health ordering nursing homes residents who left their facilities to be treated for COVID-19 be readmitted to the nursing home once they were released from the hospital. Earlier this week, the State Health Department issued a report claiming the high number of coronavirus deaths in nursing homes was, primarily, caused by staff members and visitors bringing the virus in, not because of the administration's policies.

As the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Health, Senator Gallivan says families deserve a thorough and independent investigation.

"We should not be surprised that the Department of Health's investigation of itself has resulted in a validation of its policies and decisions," Senator Gallivan said. "We need to have an objective review of this issue and how the administration's directives may have contributed to the crisis we have seen in nursing homes and other assisted living facilities. Legislative hearings are appropriate and necessary."

Senator Gallivan says hearings should exam how COVID-19 cases and deaths in nursing homes are reported; the level of preparedness within nursing homes to deal with infection control; current state oversight of nursing homes and whether it is adequate and appropriate; and Department of Health regulations and directives to nursing homes regarding COVID-19.

Senator Gallivan says gathering this information will be vital in guiding the Legislature in identifying problem areas and making recommendations to correct them, including the possibility of new legislation, oversight and budget allocations.