



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

Tedisco to Cuomo: How Many People Really Died from COVID-19 in NYS Nursing Homes?

SENATOR JIM TEDISCO July 28, 2020

Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C,I-Glenville) is continuing his efforts to get the facts about what happened that led to the death of thousands of New Yorkers from COVID-19 in state-regulated nursing homes. Today, Senator Tedisco has written to Governor Andrew Cuomo (and Cc'd Senators Rivera and Skoufis) requesting that his administration release a “complete accounting of all nursing home-related deaths” since the beginning of the pandemic.

Tedisco’s letter (see attached) calls on the Administration to provide a full breakdown of data since the beginning of the pandemic regarding all those that passed away from contracting COVID-19 in nursing homes, and those who because of severe illness were forced to be taken to and lost their lives at a hospital.

Nursing home directives have resulted in disparities statewide in the reporting of the deaths of residents. For example, in March 2020, the statewide protocol was that nursing homes report ONLY residents that died within the four walls of skilled nursing facilities as COVID-19-related deaths.

According to the state Department of Health (DOH), over 6,500 New Yorkers have died at state nursing homes from COVID-19. However, that number may be significantly

undercounted as DOH doesn't take into account those who may have been infected in a nursing home and then were released and died in a hospital, as the Empire Center has noted in a recent analysis.

Senator Tedisco has sent copies of his letter to the Governor to Senate Health Committee Chair Gustavo Rivera (D-Bronx) and Senate Investigations Committee Chair James Skoufis (D-Hudson Valley) and is requesting that they also inquire about the real numbers as part of the joint legislative hearings they will be holding next week, and make that information public if and when they receive it.

“The bottom line is we need to know the real numbers as to how many people in New York state-regulated nursing homes died as a result of COVID-19 and not just a partial accounting of some of the cases, which is what it seems we've received from the Administration so far,” said Senator Tedisco.

“As we continue to evaluate and investigate what happened during the peak of the pandemic and prepare for the future, it is vital that accurate information is publicly reported so we can save future lives in the event of a second wave of the virus or another pandemic. We need the Administration to provide a full breakdown of data since the beginning of the pandemic regarding all those that passed away from contracting COVID-19 in nursing homes, and those who because of severe illness were forced to be taken to and lost their lives at a hospital. Getting these numbers is imperative to have before the joint legislative hearings starting August 3rd and prior to any independent investigation takes place as I've called for,” said Tedisco.

Senator Tedisco is sponsoring legislation ([S.8756](#)) for an independent, unbiased and bipartisan investigation with subpoena power to perform a top-to-bottom investigation to get answers and provide a measure of closure for the families of those who lost their lives and

help prepare for a second wave of the pandemic.

(A PDF version of the full letter is attached)