



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Senator Metzger Questions Witnesses in Day 2 of Legislative Hearings on Nursing Homes During COVID-19

JEN METZGER August 11, 2020

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**Hudson Valley and Catskills, NY...** Health, Aging, and Investigations & Government Operations Committees of the State Senate and Assembly yesterday held the second of two public hearings to examine COVID-19 transmission in residential health care facilities and hear recommendations for improving systems as well as outcomes and experiences of patients, families, caregivers and providers. Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42), a member of the Senate Health Committee, questioned Steven Hanse, President & CEO of the New York State Health

Facilities Association, and other witnesses on concerns about preparation for a possible future surge, including the status of personal protective equipment (PPE) stockpiling efforts and planning for step-down facilities for COVID-19 positive nursing home residents transferred from hospitals. Long-term health care associations, advocacy organizations, 1199SEIU members, families who lost loved ones, and other witnesses provided testimony in the day-long hearing that concluded just before 11:00 pm last evening.

"We owe it to the families who have lost loved ones, the staff who are putting their lives on the line, and all nursing home residents to identify the key problems and make smart preparations now in the event of a second surge in the fall," **said Senator Jen Metzger.**

"I represent Hudson Valley and Catskills communities with nursing homes that faced tremendous pressure to accept recovering COVID-19 patients from hospitals. Planning has to happen now to identify step-down facilities for COVID positive nursing home residents who no longer need to be in the hospital."

Metzger asked representatives of long-term care facilities whether this planning was occurring, and Hanse responded that it was. However, later in the hearing, Metzger asked representatives of assisted living facilities that had opened, or wanted to open, step-down facilities whether they were aware of a planning process underway, and they responded in the negative.

Metzger also raised concerns about the lack of adequate PPE for nursing homes, and asked the representatives of long-term care facilities whether their members were obtaining the necessary stockpiles now, and whether they were having any problems getting the supplies they needed. Hanse responded that he has heard about some supply chain issues and issues in terms of the availability of on-site storage space for PPE in nursing homes.

Other issues addressed at the hearing included the impacts of Medicaid cuts on long-term care facilities and staffing levels needed to protect residents during a pandemic; the value of in-home care and the challenges facing the industry; issues with the Department of Health's current nursing home visitation guidance; the need to strengthen the Ombudsman program to better protect the rights and well-being of nursing home residents; and other issues. The full archived hearing can be found [here](#).

*Jen Metzger represents the 42nd Senate District, which includes all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties. Senator Metzger serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Environmental Conservation, Education, Health, Energy and Telecommunications, Local Government, Women's Issues, Domestic Animal Welfare, and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Committees.*

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