



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO TO STATE: NURSING HOMES CANNOT BE LEFT OUT OF 'WINTER PLAN'

SUSAN SERINO December 2, 2020

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HYDE PARK, NY – With COVID-19 numbers rising across New York, Senator Sue Serino is urging the state to develop a plan to more effectively protect vulnerable residents of nursing homes and residential healthcare facilities.

“Our residential healthcare facilities are valued partners in the healthcare system, and they cannot be treated as an afterthought as the state works to develop a ‘Winter Plan’ to get through the coming months,” said Senator Sue Serino. “For months, I have been leading the charge urging the state to take steps to create step down facilities to help keep COVID-19 out of these vulnerable facilities, prioritize

them when it comes to deploying rapid tests, and ensure they have the PPE, staff, and resources they need to keep residents safe. Now, as we are seeing severe spikes in cases, New York cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past. We must make the needs of these facilities a priority immediately.”

Earlier this week, the Governor and the State Health Commissioner announced the creation of a **‘Winter Plan’** in an attempt to manage and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 during the months ahead. The plan consists of five steps that include, managing hospital capacity, improving testing, keeping schools open, preventing COVID spread caused by small group gatherings and developing a vaccination program.

Expecting a surge in new hospital admissions, the state is expressly requiring the development of a plan to utilize and staff field hospitals. However, **despite reports noting major spikes in some New York nursing homes**, no such contingency plan is required to be created to ensure that COVID-19 positive residents are not forced back into vulnerable facilities as they were back in March.

*“While each of these steps are critically important to adequately protect public health and prevent the hospital system from becoming overwhelmed, once again, the needs of the most vulnerable New Yorkers are being overlooked by the state. With COVID cases on the rise and a concern already swirling in regards to hospital capacity, history is poised to repeat itself if the state doesn’t immediately take steps and develop workable plans to keep COVID-19 out of these facilities,” **Serino continued.***

In April, Senator Serino **first proposed the creation of regional specialty care centers, or ‘step-down’ facilities**, that would provide space for nursing home residents who contract COVID-19 to safely recover before they return to their residence. In September, after months of inaction on the part of the state, Serino **introduced legislation requiring the state to develop a plan to create these facilities** should they be needed in the event of an impending ‘second-wave.’ Despite multiple calls for action to be taken in this regard, and a new surge now upon us, the state has yet to publicly release any such plans.

To view Serino’s letter in full, please [click here.](#)

