



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel G. Stec

New nursing home visitation guidance is good news

DANIEL G. STEC March 26, 2021

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Senator Dan Stec today said he is very pleased Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Department of Health aligned state nursing home visitation guidance with those of the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The new guidance replaces a February state directive that required a facility be free of covid-19 for 14 days, which made outside visitation almost impossible.

“Nursing home residents and their families have been very eager to reunite,” said Stec. “Isolation has had a terrible impact on seniors in nursing homes. Without the love and support of family, some have given up hope and stopped fighting. Given the vaccines and all that has been learned the past year, this is a very welcomed and very hopeful change.”

On March 19, Senator Stec, along with Assembly members Billy Jones and Matt Simpson, wrote to DOH Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker, pointing to the inconsistency between state and federal nursing home visitation policies. The lawmakers said it was creating confusion for nursing home operators and administrators and frustration for residents and their families.

They added that isolation is detrimental to the health and well-being of senior citizens and others living in nursing homes.

They wrote, “While we all want to keep COVID-19 out of nursing homes, many contend, and we agree, that the current DOH visitation guidelines may be doing more harm than good. Given the low infection rates in many communities, increased vaccinations, particularly to those most vulnerable, and accessibility of rapid tests, aligning DOH policies with CMS visitation guidelines would be a welcomed change for so many.”

The new DOH guidance takes effect immediately.