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January 22, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Howard Zucker, M.D.
Commissioner, New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker:

I write to convey my serious concerns for the health, safety, well-being, and very lives of Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center residents who are at heightened, continuous risk of COVID-19 exposure. **As the State Senator representing Columbia County, I urge the State to IMMEDIATELY intervene with this dangerous, deadly, and rapidly deteriorating situation.**

Yesterday, two of my Columbia County constituents requested my intervention with this urgent matter as the facility appears to be in crisis and completely overwhelmed from COVID-19 and plagued with mismanagement. This afternoon, my office spoke with the local health authority who corroborated many of the circumstances you will see listed on the following page. **The local public health authority affirmed that the situation at the Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center is spiraling out of control due to insufficient staffing and an inability to control a severe, ongoing COVID-19 outbreak within the facility that has tragically claimed multiple lives.**

My office was informed that, as of today, Columbia County has recorded 69 COVID-19 cases among residents at Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center and 25 COVID-19 cases among facility staff. It is my understanding that the facility's capacity is 120 residents, so more than half of the residents are presently infected with COVID-19, which is deeply troubling.

After reading the facts outlined below, I'm confident you will agree that the situation at Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center has reached crisis levels and that the State Department of Health must **IMMEDIATELY** intervene by undertaking the following action steps:

- 1. Conduct an immediate unannounced on-site inspection to officially document unsafe conditions for facility residents and an inadequate staffing ratio;**
- 2. Immediately provide additional support staff as the facility cannot properly serve or protect its residents; and**
- 3. Provide any necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and additional COVID-19 testing that the facility may require.**

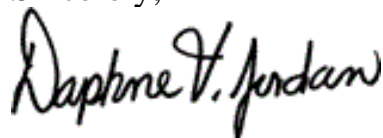
The State should also consider suspension of the facility's license if, after a thorough and fair investigation, it is found to have deliberately circumvented state health regulations or intentionally misled state health regulators.

The following are some of the specific details, many of which are now confirmed by the local health authority, regarding the dangerous, deteriorating, and deadly conditions happening **RIGHT NOW** at Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center:

- **The facility has a severe personnel shortfall due to numerous staff members testing positive for COVID-19;**
- **Many residents – 69 as of today, as per Columbia County – within the facility are sick with the deadly virus and unable to feed themselves. We know that at least two residents have passed away within the last two weeks and possibly many more;**
- **Housekeeping staff are unable to perform their duties and many rooms in the facility's COVID wing are filthy with food and drink spilled on the floor, garbage overflowing, and residents' rooms needing a thorough cleaning with some rooms even infested by ants;**
- **Calls from family members checking on loved ones go unanswered due to a lack of facility staff.**

Based on these facts, I believe that the situation within Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center has reached crisis levels and requires an **IMMEDIATE** intervention from the State. Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Daphne Jordan
State Senator, 43rd District