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THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



SENATOR  
**ANTHONY H. PALUMBO**  
1<sup>ST</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

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March 17, 2021

Dear Senator James Skoufis,

This week, my colleagues and I received a response to our February 26<sup>th</sup> letter to the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) that requested information on COVID deaths in group homes, visitation policies and other directives issued by the office during the pandemic.

Unfortunately, OPWDD's response does not satisfy the original request for information. It is impossible to verify that the provided data on infections and deaths is thorough and up-to-date because the office did not provide information on when and where the infections and deaths occurred.

Furthermore, conspicuously absent from their response, was our request to provide copies of all communications between OPWDD, DOH and/or the Governor's office relating to the April 10<sup>th</sup> directive.

These key omissions are critical to our understanding of what transpired in group homes throughout the pandemic and what factors may have contributed to the deaths of residents and staff from COVID-19.

Therefore, we implore you to honor your commitment to launch an investigation into OPWDD's response to the pandemic until we have a full picture and all the necessary information into OPWDD's policies and directives throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attached is OPWDD's March 16<sup>th</sup> response to our February 26<sup>th</sup> request for information.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Palumbo".

Senator Anthony Palumbo  
Member, Investigations and Government Operations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Martucci".

Senator Mike Martucci  
Ranker, Senate Disabilities Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Tedisco".

Senator James Tedisco  
Ranker, Senate Mental Health Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fred Akshar".

Senator Fred Akshar  
Member, Senate Disabilities Committee