

THE SENATE
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December 28, 2021

Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Assisting Nursing Homes Amid Omicron Surge

Dear Governor Hochul:

As you know, nursing home residents and staff were hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and the State's disastrous policies that repeatedly failed to treat their health and safety as the top priority it should be. However, the reality is with sufficient support from the State, nursing homes can have the resources they need to better protect their residents and staff. Given the quickly rising spread of the Omicron variant—and the State's current budget surplus—it is essential that the State makes a concentrated effort to deploy all necessary resources to ensure facilities are adequately staffed, ensure any eligible nursing home resident who wants a booster shot has immediate access to one, and to ensure these facilities have sufficient test kits available to enable them to encourage regular testing of visitors during this time.

New York State reported over 85,000 new COVID cases over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the most in the nation. These stark numbers are reminiscent of the early days of the pandemic when New York was the epicenter of the COVID pandemic, but nearly two years since that time, the State is in an entirely different position given all the tools at our disposal to combat this deadly virus. However, it is incumbent upon the State to ensure these tools are deployed and utilized where they are most needed, and our nursing homes must be a top priority for preventing the virus from impacting this particularly vulnerable population.

Thousands of nursing home residents have fallen victim to COVID-19, and it is imperative that the State learns from previous mistakes and acts swiftly to save lives and protect the health and safety of these residents. Our seniors have contributed, and continue to contribute, so much to our State, and we owe it to them to do everything within our power to provide the necessary protections during this surge in cases. I respectfully urge you to dedicate the resources necessary to ensure nursing homes have the tools they need to protect their residents and staff.

I appreciate your time and attention to this critically important matter, and I look forward to working with you to ensure the safety of our State's most vulnerable residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Serino". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Sue Serino

41st District