

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



SENATOR
PAMELA A. HELMING
54TH DISTRICT

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND SMALL BUSINESS
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
ON RURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEES
AGRICULTURE
HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
RACING, GAMING AND WAGERING

September 28, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12248

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

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker:

Last week, I wrote to you asking the state to expand access to free COVID-19 testing in the Finger Lakes region, to ensure that resources are available to comply with the health department's latest nursing home visitation guidelines.

Today, I write to offer you another solution. There is an FDA-authorized rapid test made by Abbott Laboratories that can provide a COVID-19 test result within 15 minutes. Abbott has said it will make 50 million tests a month starting in October and plans to sell them for \$5 each.

I am asking the New York State Department of Health to supply nursing homes with these rapid tests so that visitors can be tested on the same day of arrival. This rapid test would protect our nursing home residents and allow family members to safely visit their loved ones in accordance with state guidelines.

Access to these tests would also increase testing capacity and turnaround time, which is a concern in our region.

I believe it is irresponsible for the state to mandate testing without ensuring that the necessary resources are in place for people to get tested. It is important that we work with our nursing homes to provide the resources and support needed to ensure safe, practical visitation.

These families need, and deserve, to be together. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela".

Pamela A. Helming
Senator, 54th District
Member, Senate Health Committee

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