

Senator Pam Helming
Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Senator Helming & Assemblyman Manktelow Call for Nursing Home Transparency and Protections

Senator Helming and Assemblyman Manktelow today, called on Governor Cuomo and the New York State Department of Health to do more to protect vulnerable nursing home residents. This includes stopping the practice of moving patients who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 into living facilities free from the virus and releasing facility specific data related to the presence of COVID-19.

“Many of us may find ourselves in difficult situations made even more challenging because of the Coronavirus. This is especially true for families and individuals who must make quick decisions about placing a loved one in a nursing home. If you have ever been through this process, you know finding the best facility for a loved one can be challenging even under the best of circumstances. Imagine going through this process now; when because of the current pandemic, you cannot visit the facility or personally meet with the caregivers. Today, placement decisions are based upon telephone conversations, personal knowledge and available data. While the New York State Department of Health does provide a website with helpful data, it was only today that the state announced it will start sharing county by county data on COVID-19 related nursing home deaths. However, New York State must be more transparent and report on the number of current cases by facility. Sharing this information is imperative and would not violate the privacy of individual residents,” said Senator Helming. “Additionally, as hospitals and nursing home facilities transfer patients, it is imperative that we maintain nursing home facilities that do not have any cases of COVID-19. New residents should not be put into these facilities and data should be updated daily so we may mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus and protect our most vulnerable populations,” Senator Helming said.

“We have already had a case in my district where someone was transferred into one of our nursing homes for rehab, and it was discovered that person tested positive for Covid-19,” Assemblyman Manktelow said. “With people moving around like this, coming in contact with our most vulnerable population, our elderly loved ones, we have to make sure there is transparency and that we are doing everything we can to keep people in nursing homes safe. We are fortunate in this region to have facilities without any Covid-19 cases and we want to do everything to keep it that way. We must protect these residents and we can only do that if we have the proper information from New York State,” said Assemblyman Brian Manktelow.

New York has been the nation's epicenter for COVID-19 cases. According to data released from the state Department of Health, as of April 9, there have been more than 4,630 nursing home infections and at least 1,439 deaths, a 418% increase in deaths from March 31. However, no data is being released on specific facilities. Locations and numbers of residents and employees suffering from COVID-19 are unknown.

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