



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Cities
Election Law
Insurance
Local Governments
Transportation

JONATHAN G. JACOBSON
104th District

April 30, 2020

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

Re: Monthly COVID-19 Testing of Nursing Home Residents

Dear Dr. Zucker:

Thank you for the Department of Health's recent efforts to better protect nursing home residents, specifically the change of policy regarding asymptomatic COVID-19-positive staffers working in nursing homes and the clarification regarding nursing homes' ability to deny accepting residents diagnosed with COVID-19 under certain conditions. Today, I am writing to ask that the DOH immediately require monthly testing of *all* nursing home residents throughout New York and provide the kits necessary to do so.

At this point in our current state of emergency, it is unnecessary for me to go into the many reasons why the State must act to protect nursing home residents. However, as the recent news that 79 out of 292 residents (27%) at Ten Broeck Commons in Ulster County demonstrates, a rampant outbreak of COVID-19 can occur despite a nursing home administration's best efforts.

While residents are living in a state of lockdown with no in-person visits from friends and family, staff come into daily contact with a range of other individuals who may be vectors for transmission. Since COVID-19 can be transmitted by an asymptomatic host, it is imperative that all nursing home residents be tested once a month on a continuing basis to ensure both their individual safety and the overall safety of the facility. Only then, can we adequately protect these vulnerable New Yorkers.

Thank you for your attention to this matter on behalf of those we serve.

Very truly yours,