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Assemblywoman 112th District

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December 11, 2020

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Commissioner Howard Zucker MD, JD, LLM
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12237

Dear Gov. Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker:

I am writing to request that deadlines for any nursing home closures during the COVID-19 pandemic be extended appropriately, in consideration of the current pandemic.

In my district, a closure plan was approved by the Department of Health on December 2, 2020 for the Saratoga Center for Rehab & Skilled Nursing Care located at 149 Ballston Avenue, Ballston Spa, New York.

Eight-seven (87) residents will be required to relocate to another facility, including a resident who has been at the facility since the 1980's, and another resident who is alert, oriented and 106 years old.

Currently, the deadline for the closure is February 15, 2021. This deadline would be might be challenging even if we were not in the middle of a global pandemic. With the pandemic, this type of major transition could be unsafe for residents or worse yet, deadly.

This facility is justifiably proud to have not had a single COVID-19 positive resident. Now, transferring these residents to facilities within the required 50-mile radius necessitates that they will be entering facilities with active COVID cases. Also, given the recent surge in cases in Saratoga and nearby counties, many facilities are not accepting new admissions. This may result in residents having to relocate far from home and far from family supports.

I do not question the business judgment of the owners and operators of this facility to make the business decision to close. However, I remain very concerned about the health, safety and well-being of these vulnerable residents. Allowing sufficient time for residents to be vaccinated against COVID-19, and for the holiday surge in cases to dissipate, would be a reasonable accommodation.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance in this matter moving forward.

Respectfully,

Mary Beth Walsh
112th Assembly District