



MARIANNE BUTTENSCHON  
Assemblywoman 119<sup>th</sup> District

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STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

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Veterans' Affairs

March 29, 2020

Mr. Anthony J. Annucci, Acting Commissioner  
New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision  
Building #2, 1220 Washington Ave  
Albany, NY 12226

Dr. Ann M. Sullivan, Commissioner  
New York State Office of Mental Health  
44 Holland Ave  
Albany, NY 12226

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

Dear Commissioners Annucci, Sullivan, and Zucker:

We are writing to you today regarding numerous concerns that have been brought to our attention from constituents, including incarcerated individuals, patients undergoing treatment, and their family members, to correctional officers, therapists, educators, counselors, ancillary personnel, and various other staff members of both the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and the Office of Mental Health regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent confirmation of cases within several New York State correctional facilities.

New York State is the most impacted state in the nation when it comes to confirmed COVID-19 cases. While we are still learning exactly how COVID-19 spreads, it is thought that transmission occurs person-to-person via close contact and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. This is why the practice of social distancing has been so strongly recommended. Its practice, however, is almost impossible in direct patient care and in our correctional facilities.

We are requesting that you review your policies for the use of personal protective equipment and ensure that staff are provided with the appropriate gear and knowledge in order to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 in situations where social distancing is not possible. The use of protective gear and knowledge of precautionary measures are paramount to the protection of our state employees, their families, the individuals in their care, and our communities.

We commend you for your leadership during this challenging time. We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your timely response.

Respectfully,

Marianne Buttenschon  
Member of Assembly  
119<sup>th</sup> District

John T. McDonald  
Member of Assembly  
108<sup>th</sup> District

Aileen M. Gunther  
Member of Assembly  
100<sup>th</sup> District

D. Billy Jones  
Member of Assembly  
115<sup>th</sup> District