Governor Murphy Announces Team of Experts with National Experience to Conduct Review of New Jersey's Long-Term Care Facilities

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TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced that New Jersey has engaged a team of experts with national experience to conduct a rapid review of the state's 575 long-term care facilities to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and reduce impacts of future outbreaks. The team will produce a set of recommendations for the New Jersey Department of Health and long-term care facilities, as well as advise on potential state or federal action to improve quality, safety, and resilience within New Jersey's long-term care system. These recommendations will guide how long-term care facilities can safely reopen for residents and staff after the current COVID-19 outbreak and address mitigation, protection, and resiliency against future outbreaks. The Department of Health will continue implementing protocols, inspections, and testing at all long-term care facilities while this review takes place

The team of experts will be led by Cindy Mann, a 30-year expert in federal and state health policy who ran Medicaid in the Obama Administration as former Deputy Administrator at the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and Carol Raphael, former Chief Executive Officer and President of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, as well as the former board chair of AARP.

"New Jersey has tragically lost many lives to COVID-19, with half of our statewide deaths of individuals within the long-term care system," **said Governor Murphy. "**We have seen COVID-19 ravage long-term care facilities nationwide as this virus poses a unique threat to our most vulnerable populations. The solutions we find here in New Jersey will protect both residents and staff in the long-term care system and serve as a national model for mitigation, protection, and resiliency against future outbreaks."

"In New Jersey and across the nation, COVID-19 has devastated our long-term care facilities," **said Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli.** "We've delivered 10.7 million in PPE, inspected 60 facilities, curtailed admission at several homes, sent federal Veterans Administration staff into veteran's homes and issued 18 guidance documents curtailing visitation and requiring monitoring of residents for respiratory symptoms. Now, we are testing residents and staff statewide. We look forward to working with this team of experts to ensure that we can do everything possible to protect our most vulnerable population."

"The impact of COVID-19 on New Jersey's long-term care facilities has been unmistakably tragic," **said Senator Joe Vitale.** "Engaging a national team of experts will ensure that we address the challenges currently facing these facilities, while implementing best practices to protect residents and staff moving forward. I'm encouraged to see the Murphy Administration taking this process seriously and holding our long-term care facilities to the highest standard on behalf of New Jersey's residents."

"We have an obligation to those living and working in New Jersey's long-term care facilities to conduct a thorough and immediate review in response to this unprecedented crisis," **said Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle**. "At the same time, consulting a team of national experts will help us develop forward-looking solutions to prevent a similar tragedy from happening in the future. I fully support the Governor's initiative to achieve systemic reform on behalf of our most vulnerable population."

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