

May 25, 2020

Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my perspective on issues that have been on-going at area nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. I understand that the situation is complicated and fluid. The comments below are based on my understanding thru mid-May.

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> My mother is a resident at the Crandall Medical Center In Sebring, Mahoning County. Due to State requirements, I get a phone call from Crandall every time tests show another positive Covid-19 test result. I received my first call in late April. As of last week, I was told that more than 60 people were on site who had currently tested positive. I was also told that there had been more than 30 deaths to date. In my opinion, the Covid-19 outbreak at Crandall deserves special attention, but this outbreak is likely typical of what is happening at nursing homes around the State.

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> Early on, Crandall attempted to go the extra mile and they tested all of their residents for Covid-19 whether they had symptoms or not. Crandall then segregated those who tested positive from those who tested negative. That was a good move as far as it went. However, I also understand that Crandall was not able to test all of their employees in a similar manner. Covid-19 tests were only required for staff when they showed symptoms. This led to the likelihood that Crandall staff members would be asymptomatic carriers of the disease. I think that's what is happening. I believe that the inability to test asymptomatic staff led to the rapid spread of the virus. This resulted in the loss of life at Crandall and continues to be an issue today.

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> A different approach is needed to ensure the safety of people in Ohio's nursing homes. I think that mandatory Covid-19 testing of the residents and staff on a regular basis must be given a very high priority, and that the State should set aside test kits and funding for this purpose. The State needs to do what it can to make certain that their most vulnerable and helpless citizens get the help that they need, and that the interests of nursing home residents are not sidetracked as the State weighs all of the demands for Covid-19 test kits and for relief funding. This is particularly important as the State moves forward toward relaxing requirements for business and social interactions. Please work to address this issue as soon as possible now, and to anticipate the potential recurrences later this year.