

# Townhall

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## Reports: PA State Official Requires Nursing Homes to Admit COVID-Positive Residents, Moves Own Mother Out of Similar Facility

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Pennsylvania is one of the many states witnessing catastrophic Coronavirus [death tolls](#) in nursing homes and long-term care facilities for the elderly. "Nearly 70% of Pennsylvania's Covid-19 deaths, 2611 of 3806, have occurred in nursing homes or long-term care facilities," a local ABC News affiliate [reported this week](#). As we've seen in places in New York and New Jersey, nursing homes were required by the state to admit Coronavirus-positive residents after they were discharged from hospitals, while still contagious. We've also written about New York's finally-reversed rule that permitted nursing home employees with confirmed COVID-19 diagnoses to show up for work as long as they were asymptomatic -- which does not diminish transmissibility of the virus. The national media is starting to [pick up on this story](#) more aggressively:

After mounting criticism and thousands of deaths in New York nursing homes—including several individual facilities that have lost more than 50 residents—**the state on Sunday reversed the mandate, which said nursing homes couldn't refuse to accept patients from hospitals who had been diagnosed with Covid-19.** New York now says hospitals can send patients to nursing homes only if they have tested negative for the virus. **The policy before the U-turn is one of several decisions the state made that are now coming under fire,** as New York's death toll tied to nursing homes rises, to 5,398 presumed and confirmed fatalities as of May 12, more than any other state and a significant part of New York's total deaths...**Mr. Cuomo said the change didn't reflect a view that the original directive was flawed,** and that nursing homes should not have accepted patients they weren't able to care for. New York also said Sunday that it would require nursing homes to test their employees twice a week.

That's some mighty spin from Cuomo -- who just so happened to [slip a provision](#) into New York's budget back in March, which made it much harder for people to sue nursing home facilities (which in some ways seems fair, given that these facilities were forced into these extremely risky actions by the state). Which brings us back to they Keystone State, which [enforced similar policies](#) as their

Coronavirus-stricken neighbors to the east, leading to disaster:

On March 29, as Pennsylvania, New York and other states began ordering nursing homes to admit medically stable residents infected with the coronavirus, national trade groups warned it could unnecessarily cost more lives. The health directives put “frail and older adults who reside in nursing homes at risk” and would “result in more people going to the hospital and more deaths,” the American Health Care Association and affiliates said at the time. **A month later, it appears government officials should have heeded the dire call to pursue different pandemic emergency plans. The deadly virus has spread like wildfire through many nursing homes across the Northeast, and state officials are scrambling...**In Pennsylvania, about 65% of coronavirus deaths were nursing-home residents, and in counties in the hardest hit southeastern part of the state, long-term care residents account for as much as 80% of county deaths...**On March 18, Pennsylvania Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine directed licensed long-term care facilities to continue admitting new patients**, including those discharged from hospitals but unable to go home, and to readmit current patients after hospital stays. **“This may include stable patients who have had the COVID-19 virus,”** according to a copy of the guidelines.

Levine, the top health official in the state's Democratic administration, was responsible for this guidance, which has contributed to the "wildfire" of infection and death in these long-term living and care centers for seniors. She has now confirmed that she 'recently' moved her own mother *out* of one such facility. That may be the rational move, given the unfolding debacle of death and suffering -- and again, I don't think there were clean or simple policy alternatives -- but that act would appear to be a very dire indictment of the policies this very same official has been forcing similar facilities to adopt. A friend points out that as of this writing, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* hasn't mentioned Dr. Levine -- who has received significant [media attention](#) as a groundbreaking trans woman -- since April, in the context of '[fighting hate](#).' Some in the press are also finding it impossible to ignore the glaring double standards inherent in much of the national media's coverage of blue and red state governors, regardless of actual outcomes. Via *Politico*'s [Florida-based political team](#):

Florida just doesn't look nearly as bad as the national news media and sky-is-falling critics have been predicting for about two months now. But then, the national news media is mostly based in New York and loves to love its Democratic governor, Andrew Cuomo, about as much as it loves to hate on Florida's Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis. **First, let's just come out and say it: DeSantis looks more right than those who criticized the Sunshine State's coronavirus response.** According to the latest Florida [figures](#), fewer than 2,000 have died, and around 43,000 have been infected. That's **a fraction of the dire predictions made for Florida when spring breakers swarmed the beaches, and those numbers are dwarfed by similarly sized New York**, which has seen 12 times more deaths and nearly eight times more infections. More people reportedly died in New York nursing homes than in all of Florida.

In exploring why Cuomo is out-polling DeSantis, the *Politico* [piece notes](#) that he "governs a politically divided state. Cuomo is a scion of Democratic royalty in a deeply Democratic state," adding that there's media bias at play, too:

Cuomo also has something else DeSantis doesn't: **a press that defers to him, one that preferred to cover “Florida Morons” at the beach (where it's relatively hard to**

**get infected) over New Yorkers riding cramped subway cars (where it's easy to get infected).** In fact, people can still ride the subways for most hours of the day in New York, but Miami Beach's sands remain closed. **Maybe things would be different if DeSantis had a brother who worked in cable news and interviewed him for a "sweet moment" in primetime.**

They're referring to [this brother](#), of course. This obviously correct analysis [drew a rebuke](#) from a prominent journalist, calling the truth-telling "snarky nonsense" that's 'unhelpful' amid so much Coronavirus suffering. Those within the club who disrupt the media's conventional wisdom, or identify glaring bias, are [made to pay a price](#). I'll leave you with [this stunner](#), out of New York City. As one pal [quipped](#), "Ron DeSantis strikes yet again:"

this is smoking gun stuff about NYC's lethal cluelessness in the early days of the pandemic – and a longer-running pattern of dysfunctional health policy decisions under de Blasio <https://t.co/R6Vo8H1qTI> <pic.twitter.com/zze15pAb7Q>

– Alex Burns (@alexburnsNYT) [May 15, 2020](#)

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