



SUSSEX COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
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PRESS RELEASE

County of Sussex

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Sussex County Freeholders Support
Attorney General's Investigation into Tragedy at
Andover Subacute and Rehabilitation Center**

(Newton, NJ) Freeholder Director Sylvia Petillo, Deputy Director Dawn Fantasia, and Freeholders Josh Hertzberg, Anthony Fasano, and Herb Yardley issued the following statement regarding the tragic loss of life at Andover Subacute and Rehabilitation Center:

The tragic loss of life at Andover Subacute and Rehabilitation Center is heartbreaking, and our prayers and condolences go out to the families of those who were impacted during this terrible crisis.

Sussex County is extremely concerned about this situation and feels that residents and staff in this facility, and their families, must be assured that everything possible is being done to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to safely care for those who are ill. We were disappointed to hear the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) misrepresent the facts in a televised press conference on April 16th.

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To be clear, in direct contrast to what was reported by the NJDOH, the Sussex County Division of Health (SCDOH) did not ever indicate that current staffing levels at this facility were “appropriate” or “solid”. On March 29th, the SCDOH reported to the NJDOH an outbreak/cluster of this virus within the facility. It is the NJDOH that regulates a wide range of health policies for quality of care in long term care facilities such as Andover Subacute and Rehabilitation Center. Since April 6th, the SCDOH filed multiple complaints with the NJDOH, spoke with the State Ombudsman’s Office, advised the Sussex County Prosecutor of allegations, which were acted upon by the Andover Township Police Department, and alerted state and federal officials about critical needs within the facility that required immediate attention. Additionally, since April 1st, the Sussex County Sheriff’s Office of Emergency Management (SCOEM) has made five deliveries of gloves, masks, gowns, and hand sanitizer to the facilities.

We are incredibly grateful for the work of the SCDOH and their ongoing commitment and compassion towards the residents of all long-term care facilities within Sussex County. We fully support the State Attorney General Office’s investigation of this terrible, ongoing loss of life in order to prevent a tragic situation of this magnitude from ever happening again. We are confident that this investigation will reveal why our initial pleas for help went unanswered, and why this action did not come in time to save lives. As Governor Murphy has asserted, now is the time to clean up these systemic problems. The residents of the Andover Subacute and Rehabilitation Center, and the people of Sussex County, deserve nothing less.

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