

May 31,2020

The Healthcare Advocacy Council of North Carolina is calling immediate attention to the negative impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on seniors in North Carolina and points of action that need to be urgently implemented across our state.

Mandated COVID virus lock-downs and quarantines went into place on March 10 without the checks and balances needed between patients, families, communities and governing agencies. Regulatory requirements and third party oversight previously in place have been relaxed under North Carolina executive orders, with the intention of giving facilities the ability to work effectively to control outbreaks in their communities. The result is restriction of any visitation by ombudsmen, advocates, family or friends and has left seniors isolated and without an outside voice.

Our older citizens are now in jeopardy not just because of the virus but due to the extreme isolation. Seniors with less access and understanding of video communication are experiencing accelerated cognitive decline, increasing depression, intense grief and declining will to live.

We are calling on our state and federal officials, to prioritize our seniors for PPE, testing and federal financial support over other commercial activities. We request that lawmakers take immediate action to ensure congregant resident rights are restored, essential workers are supplied with proper PPE, residents and staff are tested and communities restore surveillance and investigation by county ombudsmen.

Signed,

Healthcare Advocacy Council of North Carolina

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