

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**RECKLING SEEKS COVID-19/ NURSING HOME ANSWERS**  
***Sends FOIA request to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services***

On Saturday, May 23, 2020, Meghan Reckling, candidate for state representative in the 47<sup>th</sup> district sent the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services a four-page Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request on behalf of the residents in Livingston County. Reckling is requesting information related to COVID-19 in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

“I have talked to several families from Livingston County who lost a loved one after COVID-19 patients were moved into the same facility as their family member. The median age of Michigan COVID-19 patients is 77. Clearly this virus is exacting a grim toll in nursing homes across our state,” said Reckling. “The Governor has consistently bragged about her transparency; however, for over a month, she and her Administration have refused to publicly release information related to COVID-19 and nursing homes. That sends a bad message. Is the data worse than we know? The senior population in nursing homes and long-term care facilities is the most tracked population in Michigan. Grandma cannot take a Tylenol without them tracking it. There is no way the State of Michigan does not have this information” she continued.

On April 15, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed an order mandating that nursing homes and other long-term care facilities accept COVID-19 patients from nearby hospitals. If a nursing home’s occupancy is at 80% or more of its capacity, it must refer coronavirus patients to a “regional hub” or another long-term care facility with additional rooms and resources.

Reckling has questions. “The Governor’s executive order effectively turned the state’s nursing homes into breeding grounds, exposing hundreds of vulnerable residents to the virus” Reckling stated. “How many have died in nursing homes? The Governor refuses to be transparent with the data. The Administration claims that the original purpose of the policy was to free up room in hospitals and prevent the healthcare system from being overwhelmed. However, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, one fact has been clear – the senior population and those living in nursing homes and long-term care facilities are some of the most vulnerable among us” she concluded.

Contained in the four-page FOIA request, Reckling requested information from March 11, 2020 to May 23, 2020, including:

- The total number of tests that have been administered to nursing home and long-term care patients;

- The total number of positive or suspected positive COVID-19 patients in nursing homes and long-term care facilities;
- The total number of patients from nursing homes and long-term care facilities that passed away either “at home” or in the hospital and it was deemed they passed away from COVID-19 or anything related to COVID-19;
- The number of staff who work at nursing homes and long-term care facilities, on a facility-by-facility basis, that have tested positive for COVID-19 or are assumed to have COVID-19;
- Any written communication from any DHHS employee, including Director Robert Gordon that relates to any of the five Executive Orders pertaining to nursing homes and long-term care facilities OR any written communications that relates to COVID-19 in general in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

A local Detroit news station [was able to obtain data](#) from Detroit's health department, as well as the health departments of the three counties in metropolitan Detroit (the state's most populous): Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb.

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*Reckling and her husband live with their two children in Handy Township.*  
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