

Transmitted via email

May 4, 2021

The Honorable Joseph McNamara, Chair
House Health and Human Services Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman McNamara,

I fully support Hours Resolution No. 6236 sponsored by Representative Casimiro and commend her for introducing the Resolution.

As Co-Chair of the Long Term Care Coordinating Council I was increasingly alarmed over the months by the cases and mortality from Covid 19 among our nursing home residents. Hearing about the heartache experienced by residents and families denied visitation to their loved ones in nursing homes was painful. At the beginning of February this year I asked if the Department of Health was requiring nursing facilities to report on the status of Covid 19 vaccinations for residents and staff members. The Pharmacy program to bring Covid 19 vaccines to nursing home residents and staff was welcome news. However, reports a few months back of some staff hesitancy to get vaccinated was disturbing. Reporting of flu vaccinations in nursing homes is required and given the extremely high Covid infection rates requiring such reporting for Covid 19 vaccinations seemed to be the right policy. I was told that reporting to the CDC was being done by the Pharmacy program but such reports were not easily found by the public.

As Rep. Casimiro's Resolution points out, more than half of deaths attributed to Covid 19 in the state have been among nursing facility residents. Research shows many of the infections are spread through asymptomatic persons and unvaccinated staff could unknowingly transmit the infection despite the screening and testing protocols in place.

Last week the Department of Health issued an emergency regulation to require effective May 30, 2021, each licensed health care facility to document in its internal records the Covid 19 vaccination status of its health care workers. Each health care facility shall also post monthly in an accessible place in the facility and on its website a report containing detailed aggregated data pertaining to the Covid 19 vaccination status of its health care workers. Similar emergency regulations were announced for assisted living residences.

The above noted emergency regulations are welcome. However, I believe it is also important that reporting on aggregate resident Covid vaccination status (de-identified) by both numbers and percent of occupants in congregate care settings is also an important public policy to continue to combat this devastating pandemic and urge you and members of the Committee to recommend the Resolution's passage. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Maureen Maigret, Chair
Long Term Care Coordinating Council