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## Gingrich and Rep. Reed: Cuomo's coronavirus nursing home disaster – Hold governor accountable

Cuomo may think he will never have to accept responsibility for the state's fatal errors.

By [Newt Gingrich](#), Rep. Tom Reed | [Fox News](#)

We've had 100 consecutive days of daily briefings – and not heard a single real answer. While a few reporters tried, no individual has been able to elicit an explanation from Gov. [Andrew Cuomo](#) on the decisions behind New York state's disastrous [nursing home policies](#) during the [coronavirus](#) pandemic. With his press conferences ending recently, Cuomo may think he will never have to accept responsibility for the state's fatal errors.

We can't let this happen.

New York owes each of the grieving families who lost a parent or grandparent an explanation as to why the state was unable to protect our most vulnerable population – and what it is doing today to ensure their safety moving forward.

The facts speak for themselves. New York state has seen more than 6,300 confirmed nursing home and adult care facility deaths from COVID-19. The number of fatalities is almost certainly double that, when properly accounting for nursing home resident deaths that transpired at the hospital (which New York state refuses to do).

What led to New York killing so many of our nation's seniors?

For 46 days, Cuomo and his staff forced nursing homes to receive COVID-positive patients.

The medical community, including the Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine (AMDA), was quick to call out this policy as unsafe as it would boost the risk of transmission, endanger lives and increase the death rate. So quick, in fact, the AMDA's concerning letter was sent to the governor one day after his March 25 order was announced. CMS guidelines also explicitly advised against such policies.

As cries for help and dire questions quickly mounted over the state's order, the governor opted to avoid meeting with stakeholders and instead go on television to joke around with his brother.

The decision to ignore the warnings proved deadly. Though the record is clear, Cuomo has claimed the Trump administration is at fault, and the state merely did what it was told. Just last week, the governor repeated this defense, despite independent fact-checkers confirming the claim was completely false.

Given the lack of concrete information available to the public regarding Cuomo's decision-making process, we are left to wonder what exactly encouraged New York to make the choices it did. The governor's ties to the powerful advocacy group, the Greater New York Hospital Association, are certainly worth reviewing.

**It is no coincidence, then, that other states with high nursing home deaths also happen to be run by Democratic governors who chose to contradict CDC guidance.**

Think this is some imagined conspiracy? It was the Guardian that methodically exposed Cuomo's move to quietly provide medical executives with immunity after receiving massive campaign donations. Imagine the uproar if these policy directives and connections came from a Republican governor. It is no coincidence, then, that other states with high nursing home deaths also happen to be run by Democratic governors who chose to contradict Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance. While they too have tried to skirt by with little criticism of their decisions, we are leading the effort to investigate the extent of the malpractice.

If we are going to protect our nation's parents and grandparents moving forward, we need to move past the deceit, get to the truth and put the best policies in place to ensure their safety. This includes addressing a number of issues that have gone ignored for far too long. In states like New York, lack of guidance has led nursing homes to bear the brunt of the exorbitant cost to conduct regular COVID tests. Without clear support, nursing home leaders and their incredible staffs worry they will be bankrupted and forced to close. Leaving our parents and grandparents homeless is not an option.

Blanket bans on visitation are also not a viable policy. Our nation's parents and grandparents are bearing the burden of this crisis alone, and the toll of extended isolation is severe. Instead of ignoring the problem, we should be looking at any way to facilitate visits with the proper protections in place. As executive director of the Empire State Association of Assisted Living Lisa Newcomb said recently, "there are ways to conduct the visits safely."

For months, the media has done little to shine a light on the horrific and failed policies of states like New York. The American people deserve answers and real solutions.

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