

Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis
Hearing on “Examining Long-Term Care in America: The Impact of the Coronavirus in Nursing Homes”
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Statement for the Record
September 21, 2022

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo called his and the state's handling of the coronavirus “[beautiful](#).” My dad being placed on a ventilator wasn’t beautiful.

My brother sleeping in the hospital parking lot just so he could be close to my Dad wasn’t beautiful.

Standing by helpless while my Dad’s organs failed one-by-one, wasn’t beautiful.

Making the decision to take my Dad off the machines wasn’t beautiful.

My father dying all alone wasn’t beautiful.

The Cuomo administration [denying](#) us a proper funeral wasn't beautiful.

Comforting my grieving mother every single day because she doesn’t want my dad to be dead isn’t beautiful.

Hearing Cuomo [blame these deaths](#) on God, former President Donald Trump, Mother Nature, the media, the nursing home staff, and even the nursing home patients themselves, wasn't beautiful.

Hearing Cuomo respond, “[Who cares?](#)” when speaking about the thousands of seniors who died and were not properly counted wasn't beautiful.

Nothing about the inhumane way our seniors were treated by the Cuomo administration was beautiful. It should be criminal.

My father, [Daniel Alvino](#), had a huge personality. He was a veteran, a football fanatic, and his family meant the world to him. His booming laugh would be the highlight of every holiday, as well as the table full of food he took delight in presenting to his guests. My dad taught me from a young age the importance of being generous by helping needy children afford to play sports by funding their fees and buying their equipment. I know everyone says that their dad is the best, but mine really was the best man a daughter could ever want as a role model.

In March 2020, he was placed into a rehabilitation facility in a New York nursing home [after neck surgery](#). In phone conversations with him, he [told us he was neglected and abused](#).

He was made to eat with his face down in a dish like a dog because the aide refused to help him. He sat in his waste for hours on end. He didn’t even have his teeth brushed for days. Then, on March 25, the Cuomo administration ordered recovering coronavirus patients to be [placed into](#)

[nursing homes](#) and forbid nursing homes from requiring patients to be tested. Sadly, my father was [exposed](#) to COVID-19 and started to show symptoms.

At the end of March, the facility told us he was well enough to come home, but they lied. He collapsed on the driveway too weak to enter his home. My family immediately caught the virus and my father was so sick he had to be rushed to a hospital. On April 14, 2020, Dad died of COVID-19 at the age of 76. He remains uncounted in Cuomo's COVID death toll.

Now we know Cuomo wasn't counting my father as among the deaths associated with nursing homes. He and his staff covered up thousands of deaths.

The New York Attorney General's Office [released a report](#) in January 2021 that said the state may be undercounting COVID-19 deaths of nursing home residents by as much as 50% because it doesn't include residents who were transferred to hospitals. That means the true death toll of New York nursing home residents is over 15,000 people. If we count the number of senior citizens that died from isolation and lock outs, the death counts would be astronomical. Not only did I lose my dad to COVID acquired in a nursing home, I lost my grandmother 3 months later to "failure to thrive" due to the lockouts.

The Cuomo administration's deception has been despicable. The former-governor's top aide Melissa DeRosa admitted they froze the count of nursing home-related deaths because they thought it would make the administration look bad in an ongoing federal investigation. This is according to the reporting of multiple [publications](#), based on anonymous sources and [transcripts](#). This investigation started by President Trump was ended by President Biden. A move that is unconscionable when you take into account that Governors' Murphy, Wolf, Newsom and Whitmer followed Cuomo's fatally-flawed mandate.

I am the assistant director of the group, [Voices for Seniors](#), which is made up of families just like mine: We are different ages, races, genders, religions, and political ideologies. We stand together united to get accountability, justice, and reform. There is nothing political when it comes to Cuomo's lethal policies and the mass death of seniors.

What kind of society would we be if we don't learn from this tragedy and put measures in place to prevent it from ever happening again? We can fix this, but first we need an independent investigation to determine exactly what went wrong. Then we can work on making sure our seniors are protected, respected, and treated with dignity.

My father's death and the deaths of thousands of seniors will not be in vain. We want Andrew Cuomo and the other Governors that followed him to answer for their decisions and we want legislation so that a tragedy of this magnitude never happens again. We knew COVID was most deadly to the elderly, therefore we want to know why Cuomo ordered over 9,000 COVID patients into their nursing homes. We want to know why the Biden DOJ ended the probe into the COVID nursing home massacre. We want to know why our loved ones died preventable deaths.

One action Congress can take right now is to pass HR3733, the Essential Caregivers Act. It's a no-brainer and would prevent thousands of deaths in the event of another public health

emergency. Another action Congress can take is to investigate this elderly genocide perpetrated by several governors, subpoena these public officials and make them answer for their decisions. It's time we revise the nursing home patient's bill of rights and hold anyone accountable that violates them.

Now is the time to stop playing a game of political football and simply do the right thing. Our seniors trust us to care for them; we cannot fail them again.

-Tracey Alvino

Director of Voices for Seniors, High school teacher, grieving daughter.