

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**DATE: May 11, 2020****Contact: Susan J. Soloway, Freeholder Deputy Director**Susan.soloway@co.hunterdon.nj.us

County Health Department Helps Fight COVID-19 In Care Centers

Hunterdon County has supplied long term care facilities, and the independent living facility in the county, with over 72,000 units of personal protective equipment (PPE) and 70 COVID-19 test kits, as part of the County Health Department's efforts to assist the facilities in preventing the spread of COVID-19, Freeholder Board Deputy Director Sue Soloway reported at the May 5th Board meeting, held by teleconference.

Soloway, the Freeholder Board's liaison for the Health Department, said "We all know that containing the spread of an infectious disease in a closed environment like a long term care facility is extremely difficult. Our hearts break for the loved ones lost in those facilities, isolated from their families. And we offer our support, prayers, and thanks to the dedicated staffs at those facilities who are trying desperately to save people, while facing serious risks themselves."

Soloway reported that the four privately operated facilities in the county; Country Arch Care Center in Union Township, Hunterdon Care Center in Flemington, Little Brook Nursing Home in Califon, and Rolling Hills Care Center in Lebanon, and Independence Manor, an assisted living center, in Flemington, by state law are overseen, licensed and inspected by the New Jersey Department of Health's (NJDOH) Division of Health Facility Survey and Field Operations.

Soloway continued, "The County's Department of Health does not regulate and does not have the authority to conduct an audit of these facilities, but it does provide reporting and resource assistance when there is a disease outbreak, such as the present coronavirus outbreak.

I am advised that each long-term care facility maintains an emergency operations plan, submitted to the NJDOH that details their response to infectious disease emergencies and other crisis situations. And each facility has a Medical Director and Director of Nursing to implement containment action plans."

Hunterdon County Health Officer and epidemiologist, Karen DeMarco, reported to the Freeholders, "The County Department takes very seriously its role in assisting the care centers with control for the spread of illness within the facilities, to protect the health of staff and residents, whenever there is an outbreak."

Brayden Fahey, Hunterdon County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Coordinator, said, "The County's OEM has been supplying PPE to the long-term care facilities in Hunterdon County throughout this



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pandemic and we were recently notified that the federal government is going to deliver two shipments of PPE directly to those facilities, fulfilling a long-standing request.”

Freeholder Soloway added, “During the COVID-19 outbreak, the Health Department receives daily reports from long-term care facilities, including the number of ill residents and their symptoms, positive cases of illness, and deaths, and submits these reports to the New Jersey State Department of Health.

And beyond the provision of the test kits and over 72,000 pieces of protective equipment that included N-95 masks, gowns, face shields, and gloves, the County Health Department has provided updated technical guidance on isolating and controlling the spread of disease within the facilities.”

“The County Health Department will continue its efforts working with the long-term care facilities throughout the pandemic,” Soloway concluded.