

# NY Admits to Intentionally Undercounting COVID Nursing Home Deaths

On May 7, [I wrote](#) about New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's controversial policy of prohibiting eldercare facilities from screening recently discharged hospital patients for COVID-19.

The order, passed by New York's Department of Health on March 25, stated: "No resident shall be denied re-admission or admission to the [nursing home] solely based on a confirmed or suspected diagnosis of COVID-19."

The policy, designed as an anti-discriminatory measure, came under increased scrutiny by health experts and family members of deceased patients who claimed the orders needlessly put elderly patients at risk.

Cuomo announced a reversal of that policy on Sunday, but also defended it noting that the percentage of COVID-19 deaths in New York State were relatively low compared to other states.

"Whatever we're doing has worked, on the facts," said Cuomo. "Look at how many residents we have in nursing homes, look at the percentage of our deaths in our nursing homes vis-a-vis other states, we're down by like number 34."

On Wednesday, I noted that Cuomo appeared to be correct, since only roughly 25 percent of its overall COVID-19 deaths came from nursing homes:

*Cuomo is not wrong that New York has a much lower rate of nursing home deaths than most states. In many states, nursing home deaths account for a much higher percentage of COVID-19 fatalities.*

*My state of Minnesota, for example, has had 591 COVID-19*

deaths, 472 of which were nursing home residents. That's 80 percent. New Hampshire and Pennsylvania are not far behind in terms of percentages (72 percent and 70 percent, respectively). In most states, nursing home residents account for about a third of COVID-19 fatalities.

However, [an exclusive report](#) from *The Daily Caller* shows that the New York State Department of Health appears to have manipulated its nursing home death toll by quietly changing the way it was reporting long-term care deaths.

*New York has omitted an unknown number of coronavirus deaths in recent reports regarding residents of nursing home and adult care facilities, the New York State Department of Health acknowledged in a statement to the Daily Caller News Foundation.*

*In early May, those reports quietly began omitting long-term care residents who died of coronavirus in hospitals. Even so, New York still leads the nation with 5,433 reported deaths at nursing homes and adult care facilities as of Wednesday... .*

*The NYSDOH confirmed to the DCNF that until around April 28, it was disclosing coronavirus deaths for all nursing home and adult care facility residents, regardless of whether the patient died at their long-term care facility or at a hospital.*

*But the department made a subtle change to its disclosures beginning around May 3, according to web archives. The NYSDOH told the DCNF its disclosure now only reports coronavirus deaths for long-term care patients that died while physically present at their facility.*

*New York's coronavirus tracker "currently does not include out of facility deaths," NYSDOH spokeswoman Jill Montag told the DCNF. "Deaths of nursing home and adult care facility residents that occurred at hospitals is accounted for in the*

*overall fatality data on our COVID-19 tracker.”*

Essentially, per the report, New York’s eldercare home death toll omits anyone who contracted COVID-19 while living at a nursing home but died in a hospital.

As such, the actual number of COVID-19 deaths in New York that came from contracting the virus in a nursing home is no doubt much higher. It would also explain why New York’s nursing home deaths as a percentage of overall COVID-19 deaths are so much lower than other states.

Whatever the actual count turns out to be, the tragedy is compounded by the warnings medical professionals and trade association leaders offered in the lead-up to the policy.

As I wrote last week, [the fatal conceit](#) that drives public officials to pursue such policies was revealed in Cuomo’s response to these warnings.

“They don’t have the right to object,” Cuomo [told](#) a reporter at a press conference in April. “That is the rule, and that is the regulation, and they have to comply with it.”

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