Action Alert – Petition Calling for the Resignation of PA Secretary of Health Dr. Levine

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AFA of PA ACTION ALERT

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Issue

Petition Calling for the Resignation of PA Secretary of Health
Dr. Levine

Details

Recently PA Secretary of Health Dr. "Rachel" Levine, a man
who thinks he is a woman, addressed the Allentown-based Delaware Valley Legacy Fund
(DVLF), a LGBTQ community foundation, Heroes Conversation webinar. Levine was the
2019 recipient of the DVLF Individual Hero award. During Levine's recent comments he
said, " A hero is someone who does the right thing and works for the common good."

Now let's look at Dr. Levine's March 18th order to long-term nursing facilities, "directed
licensed long-term facilities to continue admitting new patients, including those discharged
from hospitals but unable to go home, and to readmit current patients after hospital stays.
This may include stable patients who have had the COVID-19 virus." Hardly the directive
from someone who is doing the right thing and working for the common good!

On March 6th the PA Department of Health issued a new set of nursing home inspection
guidelines, explaining the state would stop regular inspections and investigate a facility only
if a complaint indicated a patient was in immediate jeopardy. Remember family members
are still prohibited from visiting their loved ones in PA nursing homes! The American Health
Care Association cautioned Levine's directives put "frail and older adults who reside in
nursing homes at risk."

Fast forward to today: there have been 3,731 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in PA. Of those,
2.552 deaths are in nursing homes and personal care facilities. PA nursing homes are
historically understaffed and their staffers are overworked, yet Levine has taken none of this
into consideration during the COVID-19 crisis. Doing the math – nursing homes are the
most dangerous place to be in Pennsylvania, yet inspections are not being carried out!

Four law firms on April 28 filed a federal lawsuit in Eastern District Court against the Pennsylvania Department of Health for "denying appropriate safeguards and care to nursing home residents."

On Thursday, May 7th State Senator John Yudichak told the Senate Aging and Youth Committee and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee joint hearing that Pennsylvania refuses to release individual nursing home information and it has no statewide plan in place for COVID-19 testing in nursing homes and it has no plan for "cohorting" positive COVID-19 residents in separate facilities.

He continued, "Regretfully, the Department of Health's response to the spread of COVID-19 in our nursing homes has not been as comprehensive or nearly as aggressive as the Department of Corrections. And, to my knowledge, the Administration has issued no executive order directed at the safety and welfare of nursing home residents and staff."

On May 6th Monroe County Coroner Tom Yanac sent a letter to Governor Wolf asking the Secretary of Health to resign. Coroner Yanac cites in his letter *"mismanagement of the EDRS System (Pennsylvania Electronic Death Registration System) sending out uneducated directives and miscounting numbers"* as reasons Levine should resign.

Questions from county coroners have already forced the PA Department of Health to remove over 200 from the COVID-19 death count.

Governor Wolf and the Department of Health continue including nursing home deaths in a county's total number of deaths when determining if a county can move from "red" to "yellow. Here are a few examples:

Allegheny County deaths: 123 – includes 94 in nursing homes

Beaver County deaths: 78 – includes 71 in nursing homes

Bucks County deaths: 349 – includes 284 in nursing homes

Dauphin County deaths: 36 – includes 24 in nursing homes

Delaware County deaths: 399 – includes 320 in nursing homes

Lebanon County deaths: 16 – includes 10 in nursing homes

Lehigh County deaths: 121 – includes 88 in nursing homes

Montgomery County deaths: 525 – includes 436 in nursing homes

On Friday May 15 the rest of southwestern PA will be moved from 'red' to 'yellow,' except for Beaver County where 71 of its 78 deaths are in one nursing home! Beaver County has announced they are moving to the next phase and their DA says he will not prosecute

businesses that reopen. Elected officials in Dauphin and Lebanon Counties say they do not plan to wait for Wolf's okay before they move from 'red' to 'yellow.'

The actions of PA's Secretary of Health are inexcusable and have resulted in additional adverse effects beyond increased nursing home deaths. Due to Governor Wolf's reliance on the misguided directives from Dr. Levine, some counties are reporting a spike in opioid overdoes and deaths, increased suicides and domestic assaults. As out-of-work Pennsylvanians are living under stay-at-home orders, there will be an increase in depression and feelings of hopelessness.   Levine, as a child psychologist, should recognize the harm to children and their parents these directives are having!

<u>Action Steps</u>

Dr. "Rachel" Levine is no hero and it's time for him to resign. The very lives and livelihoods of Pennsylvanians depend upon someone who fully understands the adverse consequences of demanding healthy Pennsylvanians remain in lockdown and ignoring commonsense precautions to protect vulnerable Pennsylvanians in nursing homes. Pennsylvania needs a Secretary of Health who will work with the county coroners and not try to do their job: "Dr. Levine and Governor Wolf directed employees of the Pennsylvania Department of Heath to "investigate" or review all death certificates." Because of this directive some crematories in the state are housing many deceased bodies waiting for disposition permits so these decedents can be cremated! Levine must go! Governor Wolf needs a new Secretary of Health. <u>Sign the petition</u> demanding Dr. "Rachel" Levine resign!