



MARY BETH WALSH
Assemblywoman 112th District

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May 7, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Gov. Cuomo:

As we begin the process of reopening the state safely, I wanted to take a moment to offer my thoughts regarding two of the re-opening criteria you have suggested: testing volume/capacity and contact tracing.

These are the two criteria that the REDC's "Capital Region" does not currently meet.

Since the re-opening plan consists of four phases, with the most essential/lowest risk businesses opening first, perhaps these two criteria, which are the most problematical to ramp up, could be used as requirements for later phases of opening, rather than for all of them. This would allow for some businesses to open safely in the short term, allowing our economy to get going, while still implementing these additional best practices in the later phases.

At present, we do not have enough tests in the Capital Region to meet the 30 tests per 1,000 residents per month benchmark. Additionally, I believe it is important to further promote information that may not be clear to our constituents. With constantly changing criteria and protocols, New Yorkers are confused as to whether they are eligible for testing, whether they must have a doctor's note to be tested and even the differences between COVID-19 testing and antibody testing. Different testing sites have different criteria, complicating matters further.

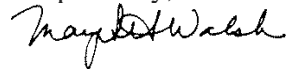
Because of this, sites in our area (Saratoga County) are currently seeing an extremely low number of people showing up to be tested. Another thing to consider is that a shortage of symptomatic people looking to be tested may actually be a good sign for our region and possibly another rubric to be included when evaluating data.

As for contact tracing, you have offered varying figures as to the number of tracers that we would need, anywhere from 35,000 to 60,000 statewide. Based on the tracer metric, which calls for 30 tracers per 100,000 residents, the state would need somewhere between 55,000 and 60,000 in total. These standards have me wondering the following: Who is responsible for recruiting, hiring and paying the tracers? The State, the local districts, the Bloomberg Foundation? It appears that the state is currently leveraging Public Consulting Group (PCG) to staff these positions (and paying a premium to do so). It seems obvious that to achieve the figures necessary

as you have outlined, New York desperately needs to ramp up a contact tracing program. That being said, would it perhaps be a better idea to utilize the 85,000 or so volunteers from the medical field, or those currently on unemployment, or non-essential state or local government workers to ensure we are able to get to where we need to be?

Thank you very much for your consideration of this feedback, and for your continuing efforts to lead New York State through the current pandemic.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Beth Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Mary Beth Walsh
112th Assembly District