

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 276

Reps. Berman, Maddock, Glenn, VanWoerkom, Afendoulis, Meerman, Wozniak, Steven Johnson, Wentworth, Mueller, Griffin, Bollin, Filler, Lightner, Paquette, Bellino, Alexander, Crawford, Farrington, Reilly, Hall, Marino, Frederick, Vaupel, Rendon, Hoitenga, Hauck, Kahle, Huizenga, Calley, Wakeman, O'Malley, Wendzel, Webber, Yaroch, Eisen, Slagh, Allor, VanSingel, Whiteford and Miller offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to oppose the Governor's policies regarding the
2 placement of COVID-19 patients into nursing homes.

3 Whereas, Before COVID-19 made its way into Michigan, one of
4 the most important tasks was keeping the virus out of Michigan's
5 long-term care facilities. From a very early point, it was
6 abundantly clear nursing home residents are particularly vulnerable
7 to COVID-19. The average age of Michigan nursing home residents is



1 82. Many of these elderly Michiganders have underlying health
 2 conditions, which make them more susceptible to the serious
 3 complications of COVID-19. Given the nature of nursing homes and
 4 the vulnerable status of residents, these facilities have become
 5 epicenters of COVID-19 in Michigan and across the country; and

6 Whereas, Despite knowledge of the significant vulnerabilities
 7 of residents in nursing homes to COVID-19, the Whitmer
 8 administration was one of very few state administrations across the
 9 country to implement a reckless and irresponsible policy that
 10 placed COVID-19 residents into nursing homes that also housed non-
 11 infected residents; and

12 Whereas, On April 15, 2020, Governor Whitmer signed Executive
 13 Order 2020-50, which required long-term care facilities below 80
 14 percent capacity to create "dedicated units" that are isolated
 15 wards to treat medically stable COVID-19 residents. Nursing homes
 16 without dedicated units were required to send medically stable
 17 COVID-19 patients to nearby "regional hubs" if capacity allowed.
 18 Under the order, a "regional hub" is "a nursing home that is
 19 designated by [the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
 20 (DHHS)] as a dedicated facility to temporarily and exclusively
 21 provide care to COVID-affected residents." There are 21 regional
 22 hubs across Michigan, more than 50 percent being located in
 23 southeast Michigan where COVID-19 has been more prevalent; and

24 Whereas, The Whitmer administration is in the process of
 25 approving two more regional hubs, despite the Governor admitting in
 26 her own press conference and during testimony before a U.S. House
 27 subcommittee that her nursing home policy has flaws. This puts even
 28 more of Michigan's most vulnerable individuals in harm's way; and

29 Whereas, DHHS has estimated over 3,000 people of all ages who



1 meet eligibility criteria to receive skilled nursing care have been
 2 discharged from hospitals or long-term care facilities to a
 3 regional hub. Regional hubs also serve as primary residencies for
 4 Michiganders; and

5 Whereas, The Governor's policies placed COVID-19 patients into
 6 nursing homes despite a lack of proper equipment, staffing levels,
 7 and protocols to protect residents. In the beginning weeks of the
 8 COVID-19 outbreak, the supply of personal protective equipment
 9 (PPE) for long-term care facilities was severely scarce, and
 10 testing capabilities were limited. DHHS has admitted that, prior to
 11 new testing efforts, testing of both nursing home residents and
 12 caregivers was sporadic early on. Even worse, because nursing homes
 13 across the state were not required to provide dedicated staff for
 14 COVID-19 units, cross-contamination most likely occurred. Nursing
 15 homes with staffing shortages had no other option than to have
 16 caregivers alternate between COVID-19 wings and general population
 17 wings; and

18 Whereas, As more data is collected, we fear that hundreds of
 19 deaths in nursing homes will be attributed to the Whitmer
 20 administration's policies. Recent state reports have indicated
 21 nursing home residents account for nearly 25 percent of all COVID-
 22 19 deaths in Michigan. This percentage could be much higher, as the
 23 Whitmer administration has not been transparent about long-term
 24 care facility deaths. Data surrounding long-term care facilities
 25 was first reported to be "inaccurate" and "undercounted," and the
 26 data available to the public is far from complete; and

27 Whereas, Better alternatives were available to send COVID-19
 28 patients. Prior to Executive Order 2020-50 being signed, the state
 29 entered two separate contracts to open field hospitals to serve as



1 alternate care facilities. The Legislature originally approved the
2 funding to equip the Governor and her administration with the
3 flexibility they needed to care for COVID-19 patients and prevent
4 local hospitals from exceeding capacity. The TCF Center in Detroit
5 and the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi were leased and
6 retrofitted into field hospitals with the capability of housing up
7 to 1,000 patients each. The monthly cost for each has been roughly
8 \$1.1 million and \$1.32 million per month in taxpayer dollars to
9 lease. The TCF Center closed within a month of opening and after
10 caring for a total of 39 patients. The Suburban Collection
11 Showplace in Novi remains open and has cared for roughly 10
12 patients; and

13 Whereas, While the largely unused field hospitals cared for
14 only about 50 patients total, regional hub nursing homes continue
15 to take in COVID-19 patients. This is not just a mistake. It is a
16 fatal error in decision-making. COVID-19 patients should be
17 admitted into field hospitals where millions in taxpayer dollars
18 are being spent to keep the Suburban Collection Showplace field
19 hospital open; and

20 Whereas, The Governor continues to issue executive orders
21 without changing course on this alarming policy. In fact, Executive
22 Order 2020-95, issued May 20, 2020, stated long-term care
23 facilities that have been deemed regional hubs "must accept COVID-
24 19-affected residents..." This order, which remains in effect
25 today, proves the Whitmer administration remains committed to this
26 practice; and

27 Whereas, Several unanswered questions remain as to why this
28 policy was ever allowed to exist in the first place. Such a policy
29 is a blatant disregard for human life, and the people of Michigan



1 deserve answers. As duly elected representatives of the people, our
2 top priority is protecting the health and well-being of all
3 Michiganders. These are grandparents, parents, spouses, and
4 siblings being put in danger. We are determined to make sure those
5 involved in this fatal policy are held accountable and that the
6 families impacted by it receive the answers they deserve; now,
7 therefore, be it

8 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we oppose the
9 Governor's policies regarding the placement of COVID-19 patients
10 into nursing homes; and be it further

11 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
12 Governor.