

METRO

NY Health Dept. probing over 2,500 nursing home complaints amid coronavirus

By Sara Dorn

May 2, 2020 | 4:53pm



Medical officials helping a man at Cobble Hill Health Center nursing home in Brooklyn.

Richard Harbus

The state is investigating more than 2,500 nursing home complaints launched while the coronavirus has run roughshod over the facilities, the Health Department revealed Friday — as Gov. Andrew Cuomo threatened to prosecute homes that under-report COVID-19 tolls.

The State Health Department said it opened 2,502 complaints about nursing homes, including 514 in New York City, from March 1-April 28.

Complaint volume during that time increased about 62%, from an average of 26 per day in the four years prior, up to 42.

The agency refused to divulge details of the complaints, but said it has not revoked any homes' licenses since March 1.

Cuomo threatened the penalty, along with \$10,000 fines, to nursing homes who violate executive orders related to the pandemic, including requirements to report deaths and cases to the state. He has also urged loved ones of nursing home residents to blow the whistle on violators.

Many nursing homes deaths are left off the state's [publicly available list of facilities with COVID-19 fatalities](#).

Among them is the Isabella Geriatric Center in Washington Heights, where 98 have reportedly died. The state database lists 13 deaths.

The Cobble Hill Health Center in Brooklyn, where there have been more than 50 deaths, has been the subject of 94 complaints in the past four years. It's unclear how many of them were filed during the pandemic.

Cuomo turned up his nursing home rhetoric when the toll at Isabella was revealed Friday.

"They submit those numbers under penalty of perjury. You violate, you commit fraud. That is a criminal offense. Period," he said.

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