

**Hearing Before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Oversight**

**Testimony of Grace Colucci**

Voices for Seniors

March 25, 2021

My name is Grace Colucci, my dad's name is John Daly, no, not the famous golfer. He was just famous among his family, and he didn't mind now and then playing a little golf. He is famous for the deep devoted love for his family and Country. He was a humble man and a man of deep moral conviction. A marine who fought in combat in the Korean War. A devoted husband to my mother Mary. He was a father of five and grandfather to nine. An avid and loyal NY Giants fan and a long time Jeopardy viewer. When we were young my father worked 3 jobs to support the family so that my mom could be a stay at home mom. I remember us lining up at the front door waiting for when dad would come home. We would watch at the window and announce, "Daddy's home!" and when the door opened, we'd pounce on him and tackle him to the floor. We had dinner together as a family every night. He was there to help us with our homework, we'd say our prayers together as a family and he would tuck us into bed.

And Dad loved to sing! One of his favorites was "My Grandfather's Clock". That song breaks my heart to hear now as it says, "The clock stopped, never to go again, when the old man died." Boy did he hold that note. I can't hear it without crying.

My dad was experiencing many health issues as he was entering the second half of his 89<sup>th</sup> year. He had recovered from aspirational pneumonia mid-March of 2020 and was released to the Gurwin Jewish Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Commack, NY.

My family was assured that my father would be well cared for. This was the first time that my mother and father would be separated in their 63 years of marriage. Dad was to be in rehabilitation, at most for 20 days.

On March 25, 2020, Gov. Cuomo signed a directive which mandated NY Nursing Homes take returning residents from hospitals without demonstrative compliance with CDC guidance and without having the ability to test them even though they housed the most vulnerable. This policy applied to residents already infected with COVID-19.

Around two weeks into the 20 days that he spent in rehabilitation my mother received a phone call from the Center. There was one resident and one worker who tested positive for COVID-19. Again, my mother was reassured that my father was safe. He would not be exposed as he was in a different part of the facility. That turned out to not be true.

My father was released a week later, unable to walk, unable to eat. A few days after returning home, his temperature soared over 103, his blood pressure plummeted, and his breathing was rapid and shallow. He was rushed to the ER of our nearby veterans' hospital where he was given a rapid covid test and found to be covid-19 positive.

My family was given 2 choices: put him in hospice or admit him to hospital and fight for his life. We chose to fight for his life. He fought too. He fought for around a month before the hospital sent him home. My dad returned to the Lord on May 24, 2020, holding the hand of his beloved wife.

My dad is among the uncounted. He did contract the virus in the nursing home but didn't die there. He didn't die in the hospital. He died at home. Uncounted by Gov. Cuomo but he counted to our family.

Every day I watched Governor Cuomo's press conferences. He evaded answering the questions, how many caught covid in nursing homes? How many died as a result? At one press conference he was asked: Why did the nursing homes have to take the COVID patients? His answer, "Because that is the rule." That was his rule. He mocked the reporters who questioned him. Rather than doing what science would dictate, isolate the sick from the vulnerable, Gov. Cuomo and other governors who followed suit did the opposite. Why?

We later found out the public nursing home death count numbers were purposely changed. Cuomo's top aide, Melissa DeRosa said they froze and hid the numbers because of a department of justice request for information. Forced to acknowledge this action, Gov. Cuomo said it was a "VOID" in his transparency. But the true VOID is in his honesty and integrity. The VOID is also at our family tables. This VOID cannot be refilled by bringing our loved ones back. We must have this VOID filled with answers as to why the Governor made this deadly, disastrous decision and who was involved.

We need accountability.

When Gov. Cuomo said "Who cares where they died. If they died in the nursing home, or in the hospital. If they died in the ambulance on the way from the nursing home to the hospital, they died." Gov. Cuomo, we care. I hope the members of this committee care too.

The match that lit the fire to dry grass was thrown into Nursing Homes in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Michigan and California. Will you please put out this fire by conducting a thorough investigation? Not an investigation to nowhere, but one that truly seeks the truth, holds people accountable, no matter the office they hold, and swiftly serves justice.

Every night my mother kisses her husband's picture good night and wishes she were with him. We have yet to be able to have the religious funeral and military honors my father deserves because of the restrictions still in place. My family, and the families of over 15,000 in New York, need closure.

Thank you.