

Senator Jean D. Breaux
Assistant Minority Leader
200 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
(317) 232-9534
s34@iga.in.gov

Committees:
Health & Provider Services, RMM
Insurance and Financial Institutions, RMM
Appropriations
Elections
Ethics
Family & Children Services
Joint Rules
Rules & Legislative Procedure

June 18, 2020

Dear Governor Holcomb,

We write to you with deep concerns regarding the State Department of Health's refusal to collect and report COVID-19 data for individual long-term health facilities. Lawmakers, advocates and families have asked the department to release this data so that Hoosiers can better know where outbreaks are occurring and know if their loved ones are at risk. Taxpayers have not been privy to this information since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

These requests have been denied by your administration based on alleged privacy reasons. However, we have learned from a recent report that the state is now claiming this data has not even been collected by the Department of Health. Why has ISDH hidden behind patient confidentiality for multiple months when in fact the department had not even collected the data in the first place?

Contrary to guarantees made by you and ISDH staff during weekly updates, not all long-term care facilities have been forthcoming with COVID-19 information. Multiple families are sharing stories of not being notified by facilities when loved ones contract the disease. The lack of information and the mixed messages coming from your administration are unacceptable, particularly when lives are at stake. One of the best ways to combat this pandemic is to make sure Hoosiers have all the information and tools available to them, and to ensure that families can advocate for the health of their loved ones in long-term care facilities.

We respectfully do not understand why Indiana is unable to collect this information and share it without violating privacy concerns. Other states have found ways to report this useful health data without encroaching on individuals' privacy. In fact, 30 other states have found a way to report numbers on an individual county or facility level, including some of our own neighboring states. Indiana has the ability to do the same, and Hoosier families are counting on the state to lead during this health crisis.

Consequently, as members of the Senate Health Committee, we call on you and ISDH to collect and make public organization-level COVID-19 data for long-term health care. If ISDH will not

report these numbers, then we will draft and file legislation at the earliest possible time to make such compliance with basic transparency a part of state statute.

Thank you for considering this issue and ensuring that the public's health and safety remain priorities during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JB' with a large loop at the end.

Jean Breaux
Assistant Minority Leader
Senate District 34
Senate Health and Provider Services Committee Ranking Minority Member

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Eddie D. Melton'.

Eddie Melton
Indiana State Senator
District 3
Senate Health and Provider Services Committee member

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Frank Mrvan'.

Frank Mrvan
Indiana State Senator
District 1
Senate Health and Provider Services Committee member

CC: Dr. Kristina Box, State Health Commissioner