

## **Boston Globe Letters to Editor --- Inbox, April 8, 2020**

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/04/08/opinion/most-vulnerable-among-us-made-even-more-so/>

### **State should scrap its plan to use senior homes as COVID-19 care sites**

**[Online title: The most vulnerable among us, made even more so]**

Current attempts to transfer nursing home residents from their homes to create specific care facilities to treat COVID-19 should be abandoned immediately ([“Nursing home plan stirs anxiety,”](#) Metro, April 5).

While well-intentioned, the experience, now temporarily halted, with the first two facilities in Worcester and Wilmington clearly demonstrates the risks involved with dislocating frail, vulnerable nursing home residents.

There are alternative strategies that can be pursued. Recently closed facilities can be staffed with qualified personnel who had been working in adult day health centers and in-home care. Many nursing homes that are currently under capacity can create dedicated units that can be operated separately from the main population. Other options include making use of school dormitories and securing all the rooms in various hotels.

We know that none of these solutions is perfect or easy to implement, but each is superior to one that risks the most frail and vulnerable of the Commonwealth’s residents, who are our family members whether by blood relationship or fellow citizenship.

We appreciate our state’s leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been clear, direct, timely, comprehensive, and evidence-based. We fervently hope that this one effort be redirected to be consistent with the otherwise exemplary steps being taken to keep us all safe and well.

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Paul J. Lanzikos

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Lanzikos is a former secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. This letter was cosigned by representatives of 14 senior, legal, and/or disability advocacy organizations.

### **Uprooting residents of senior homes is cruel, unnecessary, and perilous**

Sending elderly, frail, and sometimes uncomprehending people to new locations to create COVID-19 treatment facilities is cruel and unnecessary and, given the contamination already extant, unhealthy ([“Alarm, anger as virus grips senior homes,”](#) Page A1, April 5). Massachusetts abounds in empty dormitories that are much less likely to have been contaminated. Use these.

Alex Pirie

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### **What kind of society are we creating?**

It is horrifying to learn that the state is choosing to remove nursing home residents from their homes to make room for other patients. What kind of society are we creating that is willing to sacrifice the sick and elderly? What justification can Marylou Sudders, state secretary of health and human services, offer to the helpless and frail members of the greatest generation for sacrificing their well-being during the final weeks, months, or years of their lives? Are we now making choices about who deserves to live and who doesn’t? For many nursing home residents, this move may cause suffering for which there is no test, drug, or vaccine.

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