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National Guard deployment to Catholic Health nursing homes extended

The New York Department of Health just announced that the National Guard's deployment to Catholic Health's long-term care facilities has been extended through May 31. About a dozen guard members have been helping as non-clinical extenders at three of the facilities since February.

Their assistance at Father Baker Manor in Orchard Park, McAuley Residence in Tonawanda, and Mercy Nursing Facility at OLV in Lackawanna has been welcomed with open arms, allowing the staff to expand their bandwidth after dealing with the pandemic since in March 2020. The guard members have been working in the housekeeping and dietary departments, helping with social activities, and serving in other ways behind the scenes.

Help at the nursing homes is also, in turn, aiding the Catholic Health hospitals, which have faced bed capacity issues due to staffing challenges, Covid-19 hospitalizations and an inability to discharge patients into other settings.

"We greatly appreciate this continued support from Governor Hochul and her team, and the dedicated men and women from the New York National Guard who are giving of their time to serve in our community," said Tom Gleason, senior vice president of Catholic Health's Home & Community-Based Care division.

New York State Governor Kathy Hochul announced in late January that non-medically trained members of the National Guard would be deployed to bolster staffing at nursing homes across the state that were impacted by staffing challenges. A surge of positive COVID-19 cases during recent months left New York State healthcare systems dealing with a deluge of patients.

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