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COVID-19 Update

Tuesday, May 19th

FLORIDA. The Legislature is moving to release money in “pot of gold” for nursing homes due to COVID-19. Several years ago, FATE was contacted by our client, Debbie Dahmer, to help her to bring to the attention of the Florida Legislature that an old law passed in 2001 that allowed the Federal government to place a portion of monies awarded by juries on punitive damages, as well as fine monies levied on the nursing home industry for violations of federal and Florida regulations into an account in Florida to be used by the industry to bring better care to nursing home patients. FATE found that the monies that totaled Millions of dollars was used in several incidences by the industry for capital improvements to their buildings...not for better care for the patients. Ms. Dahmer has been relentless in her mission to abolish this law and FATE has stood next to her in her quest. Several days ago, the Florida Legislature announced that it would be using the funds for nursing home patients to get tested and to provide other necessities during the virus. Florida Representative Amber Mariano has also legislated for three years to have the punitive damages law repealed and is to be commended for her hard work. FATE will continue to pursue this ridiculous law that allows not only Florida, but 11 other states to give punitive damage monies in civil cases to the states so that the industry can requests grants to use these funds. California currently has approximately \$12 Million in a similar fund.

CALIFORNIA. The Department of Social Services recently released a new policy that offers to pay assisted living and residential care facilities \$1,000/day for taking COVID-19 patients. This policy jeopardizes the health and safety of all the residents and staff in the buildings. The CDC's first recommendation to protect long-term care facility residents is to keep COVID-19 out of the buildings. The State offering to pay \$1,000/day bounty certainly does not seem to be in the best interest of protecting non-COVID-19 residents.

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