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# New York and Newark Office Managing Partner Lisa Ruggiero Quoted by Skilled Nursing News on Influx of COVID-Related Lawsuits

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**Lisa Ruggiero**, Managing Partner of Locke Lord's New York and Newark offices, was quoted by Skilled Nursing News on the influx of COVID-related lawsuits due to several statutes of limitations soon expiring for claims that occurred during the first wave of the pandemic. While federal protections like the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act should provide a legal shield to nursing homes and other health care providers, Ruggiero notes she has seen anywhere from 700 to 800 COVID-related lawsuits filed across the health care industry with about 20-30 cases filed per week recently.

"March, April, and May [in 2020], when things were really, really bad and folks were seeing the highest cases ... there was a lot of death during that period," she said. "That's what's happening with respect to why we see an uptick right now."

The fight thus far has been about where these cases belong, and many defense attorneys firmly believe that Congress, via the PREP Act, intended these kinds of cases to play out in federal court, Ruggiero added.

"Some courts have said, 'It's too early ... I don't want to deny this plaintiff their day in court just yet because there are questions of fact here and I can't decide it at this early stage in the litigation,'" she notes, referring to PREP Act protection. "That's not ... the way it's supposed to be. Immunity is supposed to be decided often upfront, because that's the whole point of immunity."

[Read the full article on Skilled Nursing News.](#)