

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, and Minority Leader Schumer:

Thank you for your leadership with the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to address the public health crisis caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. We appreciate the inclusion of the \$100 billion in funding for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund in the CARES Act allocated for health care providers to help them fight this virus. COVID-19 is most common among the elderly population, especially those residing in long-term care facilities. These providers face many challenges as they work diligently to address the serious public health risk posed by COVID-19. They are in urgent need of staff, essential supplies, and resources to retain health care workers. Therefore, we write to request that you provide additional funding for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund with the needs of long-term care facilities in mind in the next funding package.

The elderly population is at high risk from severe illness as a result of COVID-19, and long-term care facilities that care for these older adults are particularly vulnerable to the virus. In the United States, there are 15,583 skilled nursing facilities. Nursing facilities take care of approximately 3,994,972 residents and patients each year through the hard work of 904,982 devoted staff. The average age of a long-stay nursing facility resident is 79 years old and many residents have multiple comorbidities that make them particularly susceptible to COVID-19 as well as subsequent, potentially fatal complications. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 400 of the more than 15,000 nursing facilities in the U.S. have experienced an outbreak of COVID-19 as of March 30th. It is estimated that there could be as many as 87,000 potential deaths in these communities if action to help these providers is not taken right away.

As COVID-19 is impacting long-term care facilities throughout the country, these providers have made it a top priority to protect their residents and staff and have already made critical investments to respond to this crisis. Most of these expenditures have been used for staffing and supplies to prevent exposure to COVID-19 among employees and residents.

Despite their investments, long-term care facilities still face a shortage of health care workers to care for residents and essential personal protective equipment to keep their workers and residents safe. This includes gowns, gloves, surgical masks, N-95 masks, face shields, thermometer covers, and hand sanitizer. Additionally, providers have expressed the need for additional funding to provide pay increases to health care staff as well as to pay for child care stipends for employees while their children are out of school, additional dietary staff to feed residents, and to provide meals for employees working long shifts. These are just a few examples of the challenges that long-term care facilities are enduring, all of which are greatly increasing their expenses. Additional funding in the next package would help skilled nursing facilities and assisted living centers across the country experiencing these urgent situations. It would specifically benefit facilities that have confirmed COVID-19 cases to help contain the outbreak and facilities that do not have confirmed COVID-19 cases to ensure the virus stays out of their communities.

The staff and residents in long-term care facilities require immediate support to get them through this crisis. Providing additional funding for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund in the next package with the needs of these providers in mind is critical to protecting the elderly and the most vulnerable throughout the country from COVID-19. We look forward to continuing to work with you to keep residents and staff safe as this public health crisis continues in our country.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

_____/s/
David Scott
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Eliot Engel
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

_____/s/
William R. Keating
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

/s/
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

 /s/
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

 /s/
Grace Meng
Member of Congress

 /s/
Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

 /s/
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

 /s/
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

 /s/
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

 /s/
John Sarbanes
Member of Congress

 /s/
Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

 /s/
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

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Abby Finkenauer
Member of Congress

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Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

 /s/
André Carson
Member of Congress

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Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Colin Allred
Member of Congress

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Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Peter Welch
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress