

April 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Chuck Schumer
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy

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

On behalf of the American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA) and Argentum, we thank you for enacting the CARES Act, a historic emergency relief measure with the goal to “provide emergency assistance and health care response for individuals, families, and businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.” As you consider this next stimulus legislation, we respectfully ask that you give priority to the senior living industry and provide the necessary financial relief so they can continue taking care of our most vulnerable population.

Our members have been serving on the front lines of this pandemic from the beginning, working tirelessly and compassionately to provide care and comfort to almost 1.9 million residents who call senior living “home”. Our members and their 900,000 employees have always taken care of seniors and they do it with honor and compassion. They are privileged to count among their residents, our veterans and their spouses, those who fought for our freedom and senior living is fighting for them and their families.

Our legislative priorities are clear and simple. Specifically, we urge you to build on the existing capacities created under the CARES Act and apply them to senior living:

- 1) Expand the HHS Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund to include funding dedicated to Senior Living with an allocation of \$20 billion. This program is critical to the future financial health of the senior living industry.
- 2) Expand and amend the Small Business Administration (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to grant a waiver for any business that has more than one physical location and employs less than 500 per location NAIC codes beginning with 62 (Health Care and Social Assistance).
- 3) Consider federal compensation programs to incentivize and reward front line employees in essential industries such as senior living.

We are reaching a critical stage in the battle against COVID-19 and the industry is experiencing significant operational and financial stress. Because older and medically vulnerable adults have a significantly increased risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19, it is vital that we take extraordinary efforts to prevent introduction of this infectious disease in senior living communities and mitigate the spread once it occurs. The senior living industry is committed to continuing to do whatever it takes to limit exposure and protect the health of their communities. However, the costs associated with COVID-19 planning, prevention and response cannot be

overstated and given the significance of this work, our industry should not be left behind but rather prioritized for all relief programs established by Congress in the next emergency bill.

The CARES Act included several temporary programs designed to assist businesses to recover from the financial impact of COVID-19. Unfortunately, for the most part, these programs have not yet been made available to our industry. It is important to recognize that senior living communities are not nursing homes. While some resources have been directed to that industry, very little is available for senior living and yet we are taking on a similar share of the cost burden associated with COVID-19. Nonetheless, the industry continues the fight to keep seniors out of hospitals and from further burdening the more critical health care settings. Targeting PPE and test kits to this industry would provide senior living an even greater opportunity to change the trajectory of this silent killer. Our industry estimates a financial need of \$45-57 billion over the next 12 months as a result of this pandemic, largely due to enhanced infection control measures and supplies, additional staffing and incentives, and loss of revenue associated with halting new residents moving into the communities. Small and large, urban and rural providers are all being impacted by the financial stress.

Please support these expanded programs so that senior living communities and their operators can continue their efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, keep our seniors safe and engaged and remain a viable option for the foreseeable future.

Sincerely,



Davis Schless
President
American Seniors Housing Association



James Balda
President & CEO
Argentum